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THE
SAXON IN IRELAND:

OR, THE

RAMBLES OF AN ENGLISHMAN

IN SEARCH OF A SETTLEMENT IN THE WEST OF IRELAND.

Erranti passimque oculos per cuncta ferenti. VIRGIL.

Full many pathes and perils he hath past
Through hills, thro' dales, thro' forests, and thro' plaines
In that same quest which fortune on him cast.

SPENSER.

WITH FRONTISPIECE AND MAP.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
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TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE EARL OF DEVON;

WHOSE GREAT PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE,
EXTENSIVE INFLUENCE, AND UNTIRING ENERGIES
HAVE EVER BEEN DEVOTED
TO THE BEST INTERESTS OF IRELAND

These Pages

ARE
BY HIS LORDSHIP'S KIND PERMISSION,
AND WITH THE HIGH CONSIDERATION OF THE AUTHOR,
MOST RESPECTFULLY
DEDICATED

PREFACE.

THE following pages were principally written amid the scenes which they attempt to describe. They profess to detail the passing impressions of the moment, which may serve as an apology for any imperfections apparent in the style or matter. The design of the work is to direct the attention of persons looking out either for investments or for new settlements, to the vast capabilities of the Sister Island, and to induce such to visit it, and to judge for themselves. Were the unfortunate prejudices against Ireland, founded as they are for the most part in ignorance, once removed, men would surely pause, before they crossed the broad Atlantic in search of a new field for the employment of capital or the profitable exercise of their intelligence and industry.

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THE SAXON IN IRELAND.

INTRODUCTION.

"I LOOKED on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do, and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." Such was the lamentation of the Preacher, and I can find no truer expression of what I felt when about to be driven by circumstances from the home of my fathers. Here I was born, here I was brought up, and here I once hoped to make my final resting-place, as those of my name had done before me. If I had always taken both pride and pleasure in my little domain, how much dearer did it seem to me now that I must abandon it for ever, and how many beauties did I see in it that I had never discovered till then ! But the saying is older than the oldest trees around me, "We seldom know the real value of anything till we lose it." It was one of those fine evenings in autumn when twilight lingers as if unwilling to give way to night. My wife and a friend were sitting with me under an old oak close to my house, the happy home of many years. It stood upon a gentle knoll

overlooking a narrow but lovely vale, amid whose recesses many a huge tree displayed its grey trunk and spreading branches. On the grassy carpet beneath, either reposing in picturesque groups, or scattered here and there as they browsed the herbage, was seen a herd of cattle, the very type of quietude and peace. The birds had now sought the thick covert of the brake; the twitter of the blackbird composing himself to rest, the plaintive note of the robin as if lamenting the summer gone, or the distant call of the timid partridge, or the faint murmur of the brook below, alone broke in upon the stillness of the scene. All was England! the vale — the trees — the brook — the cattle — the house — nay, the very air and sky — forming a combination at once of loveliness and comfort which is rarely to be found out of our own country. As yet scarcely one word had been uttered by the party seated on the rustic bench beneath that old tree. Peculiar feelings — oh, how intense! — had occupied the minds of each of us. My sorrowing partner and myself felt that ere long these charms must be lost to us for ever; that the happy, joyous home of many years must be deserted; and that now, when we were somewhat past the meridian of life, our career was to be recommenced. No fault of mine had brought about this result. Enactments, wise perhaps and expedient in themselves, but hastily carried out, had been in part the cause of my present difficulties. I saw little chance of being able to contend against them much longer: still less hope was there, that when my children were about to enter upon life, it would be in their power to take up that position which they had a right to expect. It were madness to continue hoping against hope. What was to be done then?

was the question we were now met to discuss ; but while all gazed sadly on the scene before us, none were willing to commence a subject so important yet so painful. At length my friend (he was the curate of the parish) broke the silence. " I know," said he, in his usual gentle and measured tone, " I know what you must feel at this moment. Nevertheless, regrets are vain when they can be of no service. Your family have long occupied these lands with credit to themselves and benefit to their neighbours ; but a change (whether for weal or woe the Almighty alone can direct) has come upon the world. In my humble opinion it is the sure sign of a decline, when those principles, which under Providence created power and prosperity, are hastily abandoned without sufficient grounds, and merely upon a chance of something better. But," continued he, forcing a smile, " I am not here to read you a lecture on political economy ; you and I think differently sometimes on these matters, let us therefore come to the point — How are you best to meet the exigencies of your peculiar case ? Have you devised any scheme ?" I replied, that after much deep and anxious consideration, we could devise no mode of escape from our present position but one — *to emigrate*. " The only real question, therefore," I continued, " which remains to be solved is, whither shall we bend our steps ? Since poverty and endurance are to be our lot, let it be at least far away from those who have so long witnessed and shared our prosperity." " There," replied my friend, placing his hand upon my shoulder, " there speaks the true John Bull ! Thus, alas ! it is, that thousands of her majesty's best subjects desert their native shores, because they cannot bear others to see

them sink in what is called the scale of respectability." "An Englishman," replied I, "is in heart an aristocrat. He can endure poverty and want, he can labour and toil, he can bring up his family hardily; but it must not, if possible, be in the sight of his old associates. His proud spirit recoils at what he conceives the public degradation of an old and honoured name." "It is, nevertheless, a foolish feeling, and there exists no real degradation in the matter," replied my friend; "though I do not deny that these proud spirits form the very cream of our colonies. We can ill afford to spare these men, for with them we lose much of the loyalty and nationality of our country."

* Better to bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of."

"And so," exclaimed I, somewhat impatiently, "you would wish me to remain where I am, and, as a half-paid labourer of some new proprietor, to earn bread and water for my family, on those lands which should be their patrimony?" "A case as yet very improbable. I certainly should wish to retain you here, if possible, under any condition," said the Curate kindly. "I can ill spare you, and the poor will be sufferers by the absence of one who was ever to them a liberal and sympathising neighbour. But if, as you say, that shall not be, we must submit. I really, however, do not comprehend the necessity of your seeking your fortune at the antipodes. Will nothing but New Zealand, or Australia, or icy Canada, or the burning Cape suit you? Think of your wife and children — of the fatigues and dangers of a long voyage — of the little you can possibly know of the place in which you are to be located, and the thousand other

discomforts and disadvantages of an emigrant's career." "These difficulties, nevertheless, must be fairly met, for it is the alternative I have chosen. Better to die in the struggle for independence, than to live in hopeless debt. If I remain, I see no prospect of better times; nay, I believe the worst is not yet come. The transition has been too violent, and I must yield. I feel most deeply all the evils you have depicted, but they must be undergone. The only question now is, how far, by a judicious choice of settlement, it is possible to reduce them to the smallest limit. I have been thinking of Tasmania; a fine climate, the see of a bishop, and clear of aborigines." "Clear, indeed!" echoed the Curate indignantly. "They hunted down those poor savages as if they were wild beasts, made a fashionable sport of shooting and maiming them, till, from sheer motives of humanity, the government interfered, drove the terrified remnant into a corner, and to save their lives transported them to a neighbouring island. They were but forty in number. Can that settlement ever prosper?" "Well," said I, "what of Canada?" "Six months' snow, and annexation to the grand republic in prospect — no, that will not do." "The Cape?" "Hostile Boers, powerful and bloody Caffres, insubordination among the settlers — no!" "New Zealand?" "My dear friend, none of these will answer the purpose; in none will you find anything like a substitute for what you are leaving. Were stern realities better known, many would pause and consider well ere they thus expatriated themselves. Once embarked, once arrived in the distant settlement, they have but one alternative, — to make the best of it. It is not easy to retrace a course of thousands of miles." A silence of some duration now ensued, till

the worthy Curate, as if struck with some sudden thought, turned sharply round to me, and said, with some little hesitation, "What — what do you think of Ireland? — good land — healthy climate — estates to be had cheap." "Oh, my friend," replied I, "worse than all. Only think of the midnight attacks of armed ruffians — the abduction of females — the lifting of cattle — forcible abstraction of crops, — denunciations from the altar, and consequent murder — no, no, all this is too shocking to think of." "There is undoubtedly something in what you say," replied the Curate; "but still I have always observed that there is a prominence given to anything that can criminate or depress unhappy Ireland, which does not extend to other countries, in themselves perhaps equally wretched and guilty. One would almost think that it was the interest of some parties there to magnify atrocities, and to multiply offences. There is scarcely a broken head at a faction fight which is not paraded in print, that it may rouse Saxon indignation, and be salved over by Saxon sympathy. I am really of opinion that the subject demands consideration. Let us retire into the house, for the dews are falling fast, and the shadows deepen in the valley; we can there discuss the matter, for I assure you there are points which demand your attention." "I have been much struck," continued my friend, after we had seated ourselves round the tea-table in the oak parlour, "with many of the details recently set forth by competent persons relative to the neglected capabilities of Ireland. Many sensible and truly practical articles have appeared in the public journals, calling the attention of Englishmen to the subject, and setting forth that the want of capital and enterprise are the main causes of all

the evils existing in that unhappy country. Political and religious feuds would soon lose much of their acrimony, and the selfish designs of demagogues be abortive, if the social condition of the people was improved. It is an admixture of Saxon habits and feelings, and the importation of English capital, that Ireland requires; and if one-tenth part of those enterprising men who are now pushing their fortunes amid the swamps of America, the forests of Canada, or the parched and boundless plains of Australia, had located themselves amid the rich vales and green hills of Erin, that land, instead of being as a millstone round the neck of the sister island, would have been her richest gem; what Sicily was to Rome, or Anglesea to the ancient Briton. Remember what Cicero says, ‘*Ille M. Cato cellam pomariam reipublicæ nostræ et nutricem plebis Romanæ Siciliam nominavit;*’ and Giraldus designates the ancient Mona in the Celtic tongue, ‘*Mon mam Cymbry, quod Latine sonat, Mona Mater Cambriæ.*’ With either of these islands, Erin may fairly compete, either as to the richness of its pastures or the fertility of the soil.” “Agreeing,” I replied, “in much that you so learnedly advance, still to me, and to my family also, there would be one insuperable objection. We could bear the solitude of the backwoods of the Western Continent, or the chill air of Canada, or the sultry winds of South Africa; but the poverty, the squalidness, the degradation of the lower orders in Ireland, as described by travellers, we could not endure to witness. The heartless proprietor of the soil, whether he call himself Celt or Milesian, may calmly view from the windows of his mansion, or the gates of his park, scenes of wretchedness elsewhere unknown or unsanctioned; but the Saxon would not hesitate to sacrifice his

all, nay, even his life, in the endeavour to remedy such a fearful condition of society." "A very valid reason, then, surely for his settling in a land where his presence is so much required, and where so noble a field of usefulness lies before him. Mark me, my friend. I do not credit a tithe of what is said against Ireland. There may be bad landlords, and hard and cruel task-masters; but where are they not? It is idle to blame individuals; the social system of the country is rotten to the core; it has grown up under misgovernment; it must and will be altered; and the day is not far distant, nay, it has already arrived, when the axe will be laid to the root of that tree, and a finer and fairer be planted in its stead. When we consider the progress of the human mind, can we doubt that Ireland will yet be righted? Do not therefore decide too hastily. I will send you a few books and sundry documents to which I have alluded; look them over carefully, and without any of your John Bull prejudices, and then we can discuss the subject with a better chance of arriving at a right decision. One great misfortune to Ireland has been, that the English seldom take the trouble to acquaint themselves with her real condition, or with what is excellent and useful in the character of her people. They are so much accustomed to look at the dark side of the matter, that the very existence of a bright side scarcely enters into their conceptions. The public mind, however, is awakening from this delusion, and a few years will witness great changes."

All my few leisure hours were now devoted to books and documents, descriptive, statistical, and historical, on the subject of Ireland. Soon I became interested beyond

my expectation. Its whole history was one sad romance — the impatient struggles of a turbulent but generous people with a series of ignorant and oppressive governments. Its statistics were suggestive of many deep thoughts and curious calculations. The descriptions of its fertility — its pastoral beauty and mountain grandeur — were most attractive ; and I deeply lamented that such a country — so near our own shores — so connected with us by every tie, should be alien if not hostile — a drag upon our prosperity — a perplexity to all governments — a help to none.

“ Well,” said the Curate one fine evening as we resumed our seats under the accustomed tree, “ what is the result of your studies and cogitations? Port Philip, Toronto, or Connemara? Since you must leave us, whither do you bend your steps, ‘ to avoid the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune?’ ” “ My wife and children,” replied I, “ appear so anxious not to leave the old country, that I am strongly inclined to visit Ireland, and to form my own judgment both as to its state and capabilities.” “ Since you have so decided,” said my friend cheerfully, “ I prognosticate the result, and that after all we shall not entirely lose you. A voyage to Tasmania round Cape Horn is not to be thought of, much less undertaken more than once in a man’s life ; but four and twenty hours, or less, will now convey you from London to Galway.” It was decided that I should set out on my journey in another week, and at the earnest request of my friend, I promised to forward regular accounts of my proceedings, and to write off-hand such impressions as naturally arose from the scenes I witnessed, and the country through which I travelled.

"I doubt not," said the Curate, "that there will be inconsistencies apparent in your accounts of persons and things; for as you proceed further, and observe and reflect more, your feelings and sentiments will change. Be careful, however, to make no provision for this; what you think at the moment, write down; correct your views in future communications if you please. We shall soon discover how facts will act upon prejudices."

CHAPTER I.

DUBLIN. — MULLINGAR. — TRAVELLER IN ORDERS. — GALWAY.
— GEOLOGY. — CLIEFDEN.

Imperial Hotel, Dublin.

I ARRIVED here safe and well this morning, and shall delay progress for a few days, in order to present my letters of introduction, and make necessary arrangements. The journey from London to Chester offers few objects of interest. The ancient church and castle of Stafford and the venerable towers of Beeston rising from a tall isolated cliff were exceptions. I saw nothing of Chester, the whilom stronghold of the De Lacies, nor yet of the Welch mountains, nor of the Britannia Bridge, nor the flat plains of Mona, except what the pale light of a waning moon, often obscured by clouds, chose to reveal. Arrived at Holyhead, the wind blew such a gale, that I found myself on board the small packet called rightly "the Vivid," with one other passenger only. The sea was high, and the wind in our teeth; but, notwithstanding this, four hours and a half saw us safely landed at Kingstown. We were entering the Bay of Dublin when I went on deck. It was a glorious scene that burst upon me! The sun, to us not yet risen, tipped the lofty and peaked summits of the Wicklow mountains with crimson. Kingstown, with its handsome houses and umbrageous terraces stretching along the shore, was before us; on our right, a bold and rocky promontory — the Hill of Howth;

while, to the westward, ranges of distant mountains closed the scene. Surely few kingdoms on the earth can boast such a portal—such an approach as this. We were soon alongside of the pier, and in a few minutes I trod on Irish ground—"perhaps," thought I, "the land of my adoption." Anon, there was no doubt of its being Ireland. The pure brogue, the peculiar intonation, admitted no doubt. Three or four lusty porters seized my luggage. "Where will these go, please your honour? Where will we carry them all to for your honour? To the Station sure, or to the Royal Hotel, is it?" &c. &c. Dublin is a fine city at first sight, and exceeded my expectations. The public buildings, the streets, the shops, the hotels, all striking and handsome, and there was a busy, bustling manner about the people, I thought, which spoke of commercial activity. I found the parties with whom I conversed intelligent and well informed, and a spirit of civility and kindness seemed to pervade all classes. The public buildings are generally on a large—I had almost said, an exaggerated scale. I visited the Custom House, the Bank, Trinity College, &c. &c., and was well pleased with every thing I saw, save the crowded and filthy purlieus of this otherwise fine city. Here was my first glimpse of the national failing. In England such sordid wretchedness could not exist, at least to so lamentable an extent; the rich would not suffer it, and the poor would not endure it.

From Dublin I proceeded to Mullingar by an excellent railway. The carriages were clean and commodious, and the arrangements generally were superior to those of some of our great English lines. We passed close by

Maynooth. The Royal College of St. Patrick is an extensive building of plain but appropriate architecture, and surrounded by a large extent of gardens and grounds. Near the entrance to the college are the massive ruins of the ancient castle of the Fitzgeralds of Leinster. The country through which we passed was otherwise of little interest. We had entered the great limestone basin, which occupies the greater portion of the centre of the island, and the country was sometimes bare and rocky, seldom exhibiting any striking variety of surface. From Mullingar, public and private conveyances are at hand to take the traveller to any part of the west or north of Ireland. I took the Galway mail, and securing the box-seat, alongside an intelligent and communicative coachman, had a pleasant and not unprofitable drive. Even from my first day's journey, I can perceive that, in speaking of Ireland, it is impossible to speak of it as a whole. In every barony, almost in every townland, you witness fertility and barrenness, cultivation and neglect. One might fancy the character of the proprietor written in the countenances and garb of his tenantry—the state of their habitations, and the treatment of their land. Too often do we read the sad story of neglect. And yet, as we travel along, it is evident that in earlier days the country was occupied by a better and more prosperous class of inhabitants. Many a fertile tract, now desolate, exhibits numerous remains of large monastic institutions—of strong castles and embattled mansions. Towns once large and populous, and giving their names to counties, are now sunk to inconsiderable villages; and numerous churches now roofless, and standing solitary on the waste, proclaim the sad history of villages destroyed, and a population exterminated.

We know that in the 7th and 8th centuries, Ireland was the seat of learning, and occupied by a powerful and comparatively civilised people : nor does it require much observation to perceive, that even at a much later period her condition was far more prosperous than it is at present. The ancient state of the island was strictly feudal. The proprietors of the soil were powerful and arbitrary, but their interests prompted them also to be kind and liberal to their dependants. As these ties became relaxed, society no longer held together. A wretched system began to prevail ; absenteeism became general ; large properties were leased out to middle men, who again relet them to others, till the subdivisions at length became so minute, as barely to allow a sufficiency of sustenance to the wretched and over-rented tenant. It was thus that the habits of the people became degraded, their spirits broken, till at length this fine country presents to the eye of the astonished and indignant stranger, scenes of human misery and squalid poverty unequalled in the civilised world. "If such are your feelings now," said a fellow-traveller to whom I ventured to express my surprise at the miserable cabins we were continually passing, "what will they be when you go further west? But, sir," continued he with a firmness of tone and manner that showed he at least thought his argument was final and irrefragable, "custom, after all, is every thing. They have their comforts within those smoky turf walls, as well as your pampered, bacon-feeding Englishman in his cottage with a brick chimney and a sash-window to boot. As they don't complain of their accommodation, I can't think what other people have to do with it." "Just so much," replied I, "that men who live so like mere animals

must have degraded minds. The total absence of cleanliness, comfort, and decency of apparel, must have a deteriorating moral influence. It was never the intention of the Omnipotent to see His creature thus lowered in the scale of creation. Look at that wretched hovel there, low down in the bog. Its walls of mere turf — its roof scanty, and any thing but weather-tight — no chimney — no window — a narrow, low door serving all purposes. Again; see those half-naked, half-starved, squalid children, famine attenuating their limbs, and their sallow skins engrained with smoke and dirt. How they throng the door; while the pig, fat and sleek, and reserved, I suppose, for the rent-day, pushes his nose out of the same portal, as if asserting an equal right to be there. And yonder comes the mother, carefully picking her way over the plashy bog, her back bent double with the large load of turf she is bringing to her sad home. There, too, follows the husband — no shoes — no stockings — his breeches loose at the knees — the tail of his long, grey coat tucked up under his arm — his face pallid and care-worn — and though not advanced in years, yet old in sorrow. Alas, alas! sir, how *can* you look upon all this, and say that we have nothing to do with it? How can we reconcile such sights as these with the Scripture account of man's creation? 'God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him.'" My neighbour returned no direct answer, but mumbling to himself something about "meddling busybodies," declined renewing the conversation. At the next stage he left us, and, on inquiry, I found he was "in orders." As yet I had not reached the point where my agricultural researches were to commence; therefore, as we drove

along, I rather speculated upon the condition of the people, the state of the roads, inns, and towns, &c., than on the properties or appearance of the land. I saw, however, many fine tracts, particularly in Westmeath and Roscommon, and there appeared an abundance of stock in some parts of an excellent description. An air of slovenliness, however, pervades every thing. Sometimes two heavy stone piers gave symptoms of a gate; but no, a few briars, a fir pole, or a blackened piece of bog-wood, supplied the deficiency. A broken wall, a useless bank, a shallow ditch, these generally form the boundaries; efficient fences I scarcely saw any. And yet some of the grass-lands were rich beyond measure, fattening out bullocks and sheep, I was told, on the herbage alone. The extensive and ever-recurring bogs that pervade this extraordinary country have, you may be assured, attracted much of my attention; but I reserve any remarks upon them till I have opportunities of closer observation. At Athlone, so full of historical reminiscences, we crossed the mighty Shannon. As a military post, this town disappointed me. The castle is situated on comparatively low ground; and the various entrenchments and earthen works, of which I had read so much, do not stand out conspicuously, though I suppose they are strong and well arranged, and appear to occupy a large space. We dined at Ballinasloe, where I had the pleasure of meeting with Lord —, a considerable proprietor in Roscommon. He kindly afforded me as much local information as time would permit. With this town I was agreeably surprised, particularly after the unattractive country we had passed through from Athlone. Here my eye again rested, after a long interval, upon respectable houses, clean cottages, and

pretty gardens. The Earl of Clancarty is the great proprietor here, and long may he so continue. He has afforded an example to the other great men of his country, of what a real patriot may accomplish. My sinking spirits revived again; I felt what *could* be done, and that Ireland was not incorrigible. This town is the great mart for the neighbouring districts; the largest fair in Ireland is annually held here, and considerable numbers of cattle and sheep are disposed of. Lord Clancarty liberally opens his park for the purpose of exhibiting the stock; and here, as at one centre, the graziers and breeders of three of the provinces are accustomed to meet. The country around the town is well cultivated, and every thing bespeaks the residence of an enlightened and spirited proprietor. *O si sic omnes!*

GALWAY is an old town; a kind of Seville, as a traveller asserts. "I found here," says he, "the sculptured gateways and grotesque architecture, which carried the imagination to the Moorish cities of Granada and Valencia." It is, I believe, certain that Spain for many ages carried on a considerable trade with this place, and, judging from the improved physical appearance of the tribes of the West, it is not improbable that Spanish blood has here largely intermingled with the Celtic. The hotels are both below mediocrity, and I was surprised to find in the capital of the West such inferior and slovenly accommodation. As my tour in quest of a new home was to commence here, I staid several days, and made many inquiries as to the place itself, and also the regions I was about to visit. Galway has a rather phoenix-

like appearance—an appearance, that is, of prosperity, gradually, but very gradually, rising out of ruin. Its suburbs, however, are miserable. For the purposes of commerce, internal and external, Galway has few rivals in this or any other country. In the south it possesses one of the finest bays in the world, offering a nearer communication with the continent of America. On the north it will shortly communicate, by means of a broad canal, with the expansive waters of Lough Corrib; and, after a second canal is finished, by Cong into Lough Mask, there will be opened into the interior of the country a still-water navigation of nearly forty miles in length; and thousands of acres of fertile land, hitherto almost unproductive, will be brought into contiguity with good markets. Lough Corrib is twenty-seven miles long, and covers nearly 50,000 statute acres. It contains numerous fertile islands, and a coast sixty miles in extent. Lough Mask, with the smaller Lough Carra, covers about 25,000 acres, and is in length about ten miles. It is impossible to glance at the map, and not to acknowledge the grandeur and vast utility of this design; and my mind is so impressed with it, that my first object will be to make a tour of observation in these districts. In the position of Galway itself, I repeat, are all the materials for the creation of a city of the first magnitude and importance. The enlightened statesmen who now sway the destinies of this fair portion of the queen's dominions cannot be insensible to the fact, or negligent in doing all they can to realise it.

I STARTED this morning on my tour of observation, and the aspect of the heavens seemed to favour my project,

for the sky was clear, and a gentle refreshing breeze came from the west. Taking the road that skirts the western shores of Lough Corrib, I paused to watch the operations of many gangs of labourers, who were excavating the large and deep canal, which, as I have before remarked, is to admit vessels of considerable burden from the Bay of Galway into the furthest recesses of Loughs Corrib and Mask. As I stood watching these hardy labourers destroying those barriers which nature had so long opposed to progress, I was convinced of the injustice of one complaint brought against the Irish by their Saxon neighbours, — I allude to the charge of idleness. To see those poor fellows work in the midst of water and mud, and in the face of the hardest rock, at once convinced me that it was neither the want of thews and sinews, nor yet of the spirit of industry, that was the cause of those social evils, which had already so affected me during my short progress. That the Irishman can work, and work well; that he will be industrious where there is *the proper stimulus and reward*, I cannot but believe, as I look upon the spectacle now before me. And then so cheerful withal! It afforded a strange, nay more, a favourable contrast to the rude independence, and burly, reckless manner of our English navvies. The more I consider these vast works — these enlightened plans of the legislature — the more am I convinced of their wisdom, and of their enlarged philanthropy. The opening out of these fine districts is the most effective preliminary step that could be taken for the regeneration of Ireland. Practical efforts like these are worth whole tomes of legal enactments, and will do more towards ultimate tranquillity than fifty regiments of soldiers. A new stimulus will thus be given, the

time will not be long ere capital flows in, and the keen glance of speculation discovers new and abundant sources of profit and remuneration. Easy communication will assist the distribution of capital, will introduce improved modes of culture and arts of living, will undermine prejudices, and ere long unite the various portions of the empire by a nearer assimilation of language, habits, and pursuits. That the government which adopted this policy towards Scotland a hundred years ago should have overlooked it towards Ireland is surprising. These thoughts passed through my mind as, standing on an eminence, my eye ranged over the seemingly interminable waters of Corrib to the north, the beautiful Bay of Galway to the south, and the ancient but decayed capital of the west at my feet. The sight cheered me. I could not but feel what I now prophesy : that, under Providence, a better day is opening upon this hitherto neglected district. "Man proposes, God disposes;" but there can be no doubt, humanly speaking, that the proper measures have been at last adopted, after centuries of blundering and misrule. While gazing on the interesting scene before me, a large and handsome building stood out conspicuously, a little apart from the city. On enquiry I found it was one of the new colleges, erected according to the government plan of simultaneous education. I know too little of the merits of the case to be able to pronounce any judgment as to the probability of ultimate success. The scheme will certainly have a better chance, when, by a more extended communication with the world without, party prejudices are softened down or extinguished. Efforts like these, however, whether well or ill devised, afford a gratifying

proof that the attention of our rulers is called to the lamentable condition of the people, and that they are earnest in their endeavours at amelioration. Leaving the suburbs of Galway, and passing several villas on the right, I emerged into a gently undulating country, presenting a gradual subsidence from the high granite district of the south-west to the shores of Lough Corrib. These were flat at first, comprehending the Dangan and Menlogh Bogs, which are covered with the waters of the lake in winter, and even now showed evident marks of this encroachment. I examined this tract the more attentively, inasmuch as its nearness to the city of Galway was a particularly promising and attractive feature to the investor. The low flat, close upon the lake, is so full of quagmires and holes, and presents so little fall for the water, that one glance satisfies the eye as to its want of capability. But more to the west improvable portions appear. On the upper grounds, or slopes, any quantity of good limestone gravel may be procured; and, with proper draining and banking, these lands may be converted into productive meadow. It is a remarkable fact, that Nature appears to have pointed out, and indeed assisted materially, the capability of these extensive wastes for cultivation. At convenient distances, long ridges of limestone gravel will frequently occur, which being applied as a surface dressing to the peat produces an almost immediate beneficial effect. One method of applying this gravel is ingenious, particularly on the flat, wet lands. It is as follows:—take a level line from one bank to the other: along this line cut a canal in the bog, about three feet deep, in which, filled with water from the surrounding bog, a flat boat may be used; and this, with the assistance of

parallel canals, will convey gravel from the banks to every part of the intervening land. Seven miles from Galway I passed Danesfield, the beautiful seat of P. M. Burke, Esq.; and, further on, Knockbane, belonging to Anthony O'Flaherty, Esq., M. P.; also Ross, the property of James Martin, Esq. The country here becomes more picturesque. Every variety of timber seems to thrive. Hundreds of acres however, now wet and barren, might be profitably planted with the smaller aquatics; and copsewood, so valuable for many purposes, would thrive on the dry knolls and slopes. Ross Lake is detached, very pretty and irregular in its shape, and has no visible outlet. Between this lough and Corrib is an extensive waste, known as the Bog of Ross and Moycullen, easily reclaimable, having a good fall into both lakes, and abundant ridges of limestone gravel and sand. Passing onwards I visited the highly improvable townland of Shrue, projecting into Lough Corrib, and which, with much adjoining land, is the property of the Martin family of Ballinahinch. In this neighbourhood, and on the same estate, I also examined some valuable quarries of marble. The general state, however, of the agriculture is wretched; and though the natural advantages of this district, and particularly its proximity to Galway and the lake, are palpable, yet there are difficulties equally apparent, which nothing but the most determined perseverance could overcome. The wretched population is thickly scattered, gleanings a precarious and scanty subsistence from lands which, managed on scientific principles, might bring plenty and remunerative employment to every family. Passing over the river Killegnell by a natural bridge, I observed the ancient stronghold of the O'Flaherties on my right (Aughnanure Castle), and on

the banks of the stream many acres of land, easily convertible into rich meadow. Soon afterwards I entered Oughterard. This is a good town for Ireland, possessing a tolerable inn, a post-office, church, chapel, with a daily mail to Cliefden and Galway, and a communication with the latter place and Cong by the waters of Lough Corrib. It will also probably be a steam-packet station when the communication is opened to Galway Bay and Lough Mask. The geological structure of a country has in reality so much to do with its agricultural capabilities, that in my next letter I purpose to give you some general information on the subject. In my observations I took the report of that eminent engineer, Mr. Alexander Nimmo, for my guide, and I can bear testimony to the general accuracy of his statements.

THE country westward of Lough Corrib, geologically speaking, has three divisions. Drawing a line from Galway to Oughterard, and from Oughterard through the island of Inchagoil to Cong, you trace the boundary of that great limestone field which occupies so considerable a portion of the interior of the island, and to the natural verdure always produced on this formation it owes its name of "the Emerald Isle." Again draw a line from Oughterard to the Bay of Ardbear, and south of this, reaching to the sea-coast, is what is called very properly the great granite "moor." This district is in many parts extremely wild and barren, being frequently covered with large boulders of granite, in others with interminable bogs of various depths. It contains little or no limestone, but its numerous bays afford large and inexhaustible banks of shell and coral sand, which,

added to the great abundance of sea-weed, render its partial cultivation more easy and probable. I say partial, because there are large tracts which it would be a farce to talk of reclaiming with profit, being little else at present than fields of bare rock. I do not think that the decomposition of the granite affords so productive a soil as some other formations ; such, for instance, as the mica slate. In seeking for a new settlement, therefore, I give a decided preference to the limestone and mica slate districts ; and, for this reason, I shall for the present pass over this portion of Connemara, merely remarking that, from the reasons above stated, the cultivation of the soil is principally confined to the sea-coast. West of Galway Town, as far as Cashla Bay, many patches of mere thin red bog upon bare granite have been, by the application of sea manure, rendered available for the production of crops of every description ; even a wheat field is no uncommon sight. The interior of this district contains that vast tract of bog and moor, extending over 50,000 acres, known by the name of "Sillermore." It is rocky and uneven, but seldom rises into hills, if we except the northern corner near Leam. On the Ferbagh and Spiddal rivers there still exist patches of scrubby wood, which perhaps point out the only proper use to which much of this tract could be applied. To the northward of this great granite moor runs a kind of central vale, extending from Oughterard to Ardbear Bay, and containing a chain of beautiful lakes, which probably, in a more advanced social state, may be rendered available for opening out the interior of the country, and connecting it with Lough Corrib. In this geological division are found numerous veins of limestone, in general of a good kind, and so admirably dis-

tributed that most of the farms either possess limestone, or are sufficiently near the limestone strata to render it available. It is worthy of remark, also, that many of these lime rocks are situated on those long and deep lakes already mentioned, so that the facility of transport thus afforded will at some future period be of great importance to this district. The greater portion of it, which is the property of the Martins of Ballinahinch, is now on sale; and many of the lots, whether in a mineral or agricultural point of view, present peculiar inducements to the capitalist for investment. The Hill of Glann, which skirts one of the arms of Lough Corrib, exhibits in a small compass the various formations which occur in this district. The western side is composed of quartz, the north-east is mica slate, the middle is penetrated in a winding manner by beds of mica slate also, but containing hornblende and granular limestone covered by thick beds of pyritous greenstone. On the south and east are granite and syenite, which run under the sandstone conglomerate towards Oughterard. The district of which we are now speaking extends westward from Oughterard to the Bay of Ardbear, and from Coug, at the head of Lough Corrib, to the Bay of Ballinakill. It includes the mountainous tract called Benbeola, or the Twelve Pins — mountains which skirt the romantic Glen Inagh, the hills of Joyce's Country, and those lower ridges extending from the Twelve Pins to Cliefden. All these divisions you will readily trace on the map.

To the north of this line, which we have drawn from Cong to Ballinakill, no calcareous matter is to be found, nor does Killery Bay produce the shell or coral sand. The Bay of Ballinakill, however, abounds in both, and has abundance of limestone among its rocks, which is

easily obtainable. Advancing northward, the same want of limestone pervades the Barony of Morisk as far as Clew Bay. At Westport, however, limestone again occurs, and is carried on the backs of horses many miles into the interior. I have been thus particular in describing the general geological features of this part of Ireland, as it is of the utmost importance to the settler, inasmuch as it not only must regulate his mode of culture, but considerably augments or diminishes the value of the lands he may wish to purchase.

DEPARTING from my original intention of first making a circuit of the shores of Lough Corrib, I took a car from Oughterard and proceeded to Cliefden, along the great valley of Connemara. The English traveller here finds himself in a country which in its peculiar features has no parallel in his own. Lake follows lake in rapid succession; mountains rise up on every side, sometimes in ridges, sometimes in groups, sometimes standing out singly. Where the hills recede, extensive bogs slope gently to the borders of the lakes, affording good falls for drainage; while, on the rocky sides of the mountains, fair pasture may be found for innumerable flocks of sheep. After skirting the shores of Lough Bofin, we reach the Lake of Ardecherry, near to which, on the right hand, is the Hill of Glann before mentioned. The scenery here is peculiarly interesting. On the right, enclosed by precipitous mountains, we see one of the arms of Lough Corrib; before us is the chain of hills around Derryclare; and to the left, the dreary ridge of Leam and Glentrasna and the Hill of Commas. Urid

also, which occupies the head of Kilkerran Bay, rose far to the south, at least so I conjectured; but with so wide an extent of country before me, and no one near upon whom I could rely for trustworthy information, I do not pretend to accuracy. Shindela is a sweet lake, its waters bright, and its islands woody. At the western extremity of this lough stands the Half-way House, or Flynn's, a small inn, well known and often described by travellers. Here I was delayed several hours much to my chagrin, as I was anxious to continue my journey of investigation. Mrs. Flynn's daughter, now Mrs. King, is a pleasing specimen of the fine race of people who inhabit these romantic wilds, and who certainly, both in face and figure, bear but little resemblance to the Celtic family. Rambling around the house, I discovered a rock of limestone protruding from the side of the road, which induced me to wander further towards the base of the opposite mountain; but no more was to be found; and I am given to understand, that there is no limestone to the north of Shindela Lake till you reach the Vale of Bealnabrack, westward of the head of Lough Corrib. Leaving Flynn's, the scenery becomes more and more interesting every mile as you advance. Skirting the shores of Lough Oorid we soon arrive at the Bridge of Derryneen, and thence crossing the river Owentooey reach the Lake of Garroman. Here a road to the right leads to the isolated hill of Coolnacarton, which no traveller who values the sublime and picturesque should pass unvisited. Though this hill is not a thousand feet in height, it commands a view of lakes, rivers, plains, vales, and mountains such as, in extent and beauty, is rarely to be met with. The romantic and secluded vale of Lough Inagh, or Ina, is at its foot.

On the south side of this valley, a naked perpendicular rock rises to the height of 1200 feet, and over it falls a considerable stream into the lake below. This hill is also well worthy the attention of the geologist. It is composed radically of quartz, but, on the west side, are found cliffs of mica slate in horizontal beds. Here is also a remarkable and elevated vein of limestone, under which is some green serpentine and a broad vein of granite, having a westward direction. The southern parts exhibit hornblende and hornblende porphyry. From Lough Garroman till you reach the brook which parts the Martin and D'Arcy properties, every step is full of interest, particularly as you approach Ballynahinch. As, however, my intention is to observe upon the agricultural capabilities rather than the picturesque beauties of the scenes through which I pass, I will hasten forwards. The approach to the newly founded town of Cliefden is striking, and the situation seems well chosen, but the immediate neighbourhood struck me as extremely barren and unpromising. An unclouded sun at that moment darted its rays upon the bare rocks, and there was a clearness in the atmosphere by no means favourable to this description of scenery.

To my eye, however, Cliefden was full of interest. It exhibits the bold and patriotic attempt of one individual to benefit and enrich the country, where lay at once his property and his responsibilities. It was a courageous effort to develop single-handed those many capabilities which Providence had supplied; and if such a man as Mr. D'Arcy has failed in his object, he has secured at least the admiration and respect of his fellow-countrymen, and has well deserved that support which is too often given to less meritorious designs. That such support,

however, has not been given, and that Mr. D'Arcy's scheme has not succeeded to the extent either of his wishes or his deserts, I fear we may conclude from the fact, that the whole property is now on sale, under the Encumbered Estates Act. It was a powerful sympathy that drew me to Cliefden : patriotism — intelligence — moral courage, whatever may be the cause, unrequited by success ! Particulars I cannot enter into, for I know them not : I merely see the effort, and witness the result. Cliefden has much the air of a foreign town, as seen from the surrounding heights, but particularly as you approach it over the romantic bridge which spans the Owenglen River. I was surprised to see so many good houses in an Irish town. The streets are spacious and well laid out, and a narrow, navigable inlet from Ard Bear Bay washes the rock on which it is situated. I was told of good land here ; but I confess I did not see any great extent ; and a bird's-eye view of the country from a neighbouring eminence satisfied me that it would not answer the purpose I had in view. It is not, however, in this light that we should look upon Cliefden. It is built for a trading, not for an agricultural, community ; and I cannot doubt but that its importance will increase as the interior resources of the country become more developed. It is well situated both for export and import. I cannot do better than copy what Sir Robert Kane has written on this subject in his admirable work on the " Industrial Resources of Ireland." He says, " The town of Cliefden and the surrounding country were, in 1815, in such a state of seclusion, that they contributed no revenue whatever to the state ; and, up to 1822, the agriculture was so imperfect, that scarcely a stone of oats could be got. In 1836, Cliefden

had become an export town, having sent out 800 tons of oats, and it produced to the revenue annually 7000*l*. From the expenditure in Connaught of 160,000*l*. upon public works in seven years, the increase of annual revenue derivable from the province has become equal to the entire amount so expended. This should not be called a grant of money, but the investment of capital with the realisation of enormous profits. An individual would most gladly advance the money if he were allowed to appropriate a fourth of the returns: such sums, therefore, should not be looked upon as boons, or favours, as they too frequently are, but *as a part of the ordinary duties of a government.*" It is impossible not to accord with the truth of this sentiment. On the morning after my arrival at Cliefden, I took a walk over the heights to inspect Cliefden Castle, the residence of Mr. D'Arcy. As I entered the park, I saw how busily the hand of improvement had been at work; a melancholy feeling stole over me, and my deepest sympathy was, you will allow, very naturally excited. As in my own case, so here, I felt the truth of that sentiment of the wise author of Ecclesiastes, which I have before quoted: "I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do; and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." And so this park now so verdant — these woods now so flourishing (considering their proximity to the wild Atlantic) are the creation of not more than five and twenty years! Previous to that period it was mere rock, moorland, and bog. To see such efforts so far crowned with success, is at least cheering to him who seeks a home amid the untamed regions of Nature. It shows what *can* be done;

and if the design was too great, and the object too extensive for the powers and means of an unassisted individual, still such facts do not interfere with the conviction, that the *power* is there; the capabilities do exist, and may be brought out, and perhaps profitably, if on a narrower and less speculative scale. The castle is what is usually called a Gothic edifice, seated pleasantly on a lawn sloping to the Bay of Ardbear, and backed by woods of very creditable growth. Beyond the bay is the broad Atlantic. The view was indeed beautiful, but a melancholy stillness pervaded the whole. Not a ship — nay, not a boat was to be seen. The blue waves broke upon the shore unvaried by any tokens of human existence. Under the idea that the house was deserted, I entered a spacious hall; then a room, in which, close to the window, was a harp, betokening at any rate recent occupation. Alas! thought I, melancholy doubtless were the last strains that proceeded from those strings. I crossed the hall, and entered another room; it was yet early; the windows were open, and a gentle breeze had sprung up from the sea. The table in the centre exhibited preparations for the morning meal. I therefore made good my retreat, fearing lest some of the family were resident, perhaps still lingering to the last moment, amid scenes that must naturally be so dear to them. For my part I could only too well comprehend the feelings with which the proprietor of this beautiful spot would cast his eyes for the last time upon this his own creation, if, indeed, he was still the resident here. He found it a morass, he left it a lovely oasis amid the desert which still surrounds it. Every yard of earth, every tree had its history. The house, the verdant lawns, the shady woods, and thick

shrubberies were all planned and executed by him; years of thought and anxious toil had passed over his head; and now that the results began to be developed in all their beauty and completeness, he was obliged to quit the scene of many proud and happy days, and leave to strangers the enjoyment of his labours. Alas! Mr. D'Arcy's case is no uncommon one either in Ireland or in the sister country. Returning to Cliefden, I again perambulated the town; but there was no stir of business apparent. I was the only guest at the inn, and an air of neglect and dulness seemed to pervade the place. The circumstances in which this property was now placed may have had some effect in producing these symptoms of decay. As I drove out of the town, on my road to Lcenane, I felt a relief which I cannot well explain.

CHAP. II.

VALE OF KYLEMORE. — WESTPORT.

As all I had hitherto seen of improvements in Ireland was on the same large scale as at Ballinahinch and Cliefden, I anticipated more than usual pleasure from my present tour ; for I was informed that the country through which I was about to travel was not only among the most picturesque in the island, but also one in which several "foreigners" had already settled, and more were expected to follow. Leaving Cliefden by a north-western direction, we ascended a road scarped from the side of a mountain, and exhibiting a stratum here and there of limestone much resembling that in the marble quarries near Oughterard. Streamstown Bay, a long narrow inlet from the Atlantic, with its wild and dreary coast, once famed as the resort of smugglers, was visible on the left ; on our right, the lofty peaks of the Benbeola Mountains soon rose boldly to our view. I will not attempt to give any detailed description of this day's journey ; suffice it to say, that in grandeur, loveliness, and romantic wildness, it certainly exceeded anything I had hitherto seen. There is something which I cannot exactly describe in the scenery of these remote parts of Ireland, that strikes the imagination far more than what are called elsewhere mere mountain districts however picturesque. The component parts of the landscape appear to be arranged differently ; the mountains are not huddled together, but stand out in such bold relief, sometimes singly, sometimes in fantastic groups,

throwing their bare rocky peaks upwards to the sky, and exhibiting on their sides huge masses of rock, and dark clefts, and over-hanging precipices, it is fearful even to look upon. After crossing an extensive moor, which had the aspect of being easily reclaimable, we began to descend rapidly towards the head of Ballinakill Bay; and here I stopped to observe the improvements now effecting on the property of Mr. Butler, of Moyard. Everything here showed the hand of an improver. The house, newly built, is pleasantly situated on a gentle rise, and betokens a more than common share of good arrangement and comfort within. The lands around were manifestly in a state of transition, and I could not but admire the persevering industry that was converting one of the most impracticable slopes I ever saw into a creditable farm; removing huge boulders, paring and burning the red bog; surface-draining, scarifying, hedging, ditching, and walling, with a spirit that does infinite credit to the proprietor. As I saw all this enacting before me, I fancied that I could read my own history. Feeling that the process was a tedious and expensive one, I conceived the greatest desire to see the balance of the debtor and creditor sides in Mr. Butler's account-book. When an improver is certain that the prices of his produce will ultimately remunerate his outlay, he goes to work with spirit, and can well afford to satisfy those by whose labour he extracts substantial benefits from the hitherto unproductive soil. But on what terms ought he, in the present state of the market, either to purchase or rent such lands as those I saw before me, if he expects to live, to say nothing of ultimate *profit*? Would it be prudent for him to make the outlay, if the land was actually given to him? These reflections forced themselves upon my mind, and I could not but feel that

if a government would see its people prosperous, its waste lands cultivated, and its capital and enterprise fully employed, there must be remunerating prices to the investor. But the present prices, though low, may be made remunerating, if every outgoing expense be reduced proportionably? True, thought I; but is that possible?—only, if the present financial position of the country is changed; if the incubus of debt is reduced, and the English or Irish agriculturist is so placed, that he can bring his produce into the market with the certainty at least of securing an equal profit with the foreigner. Near Mr. Butler's house is a pretty waterfall, and my postboy informed me that, on an opposite knoll, a new church was about to be built. It is delightful to see religion and cultivation thus progressing hand in hand. A little further, at Barnaderg, we stopped about half an hour. It is situated at the head of a considerable inlet of Ballinakill Bay; and the fine mountain of Molloge, or, as it is generally named, from the beautiful crystals it produces, the Diamond Mountain, towers boldly above to the eastward. An active young urchin, who employed his leisure hours in robbing the dangerous clefts and precipices of these treasures, offered me a large quantity for the small sum of one shilling. Proceeding onwards, I passed by the several domains of Mr. Nelson, Mr. Graham, and Mr. Ellis, all new settlers, I was informed; the latter being one of the sect called Quakers. Still the same question occurred to my mind as my eye glanced over the apparently inhospitable region of their adoption—Do these gentlemen anticipate a profitable investment, or are these mere locations dictated without regard to profit by the peculiar taste of the occupiers? Nothing

certainly could exceed the beauty of the scenery; but to me that was a secondary consideration; wherever I pitched my tent, it must be with a reasonable expectation of paying my way, and having something besides left in store.

Winding round the foot of Moolloge mountain, we skirted the banks of the Doorus river, which, flowing through the Lake of Kylemore, runs into the Bay of Ballinakill. Here, crossing the stream at the Bridge of Tullaree, we entered upon the beautiful vale of Kylemore, hemmed in by lofty and rugged mountains; those of Benabola, or rather Knockannigheen, to the south, and the ridge of Doagrhe to the north. The component rocks of the former mountains are quartz, often distinctly stratified, or at least schistose. The position of its beds is various; they seem to lap on the swell of the mountain. These quartz hills are all steep-sided, and exhibit much naked rock. The Vale of Kylemore also affords limestone in considerable masses. It may be traced across the opposite heights of Maamturk, and runs along the northern side of Benabola. We pass along the shore of the small lake of Poulacoppul before we reach Kylemore. The hills to our left exhibit lofty cliffs of hornblende rock, of which immense masses have been detached, and have fallen into the vale below. The opposite mountain of Bencoona is also of hornblende, and beyond this the limestone is not found. I am thus particular in my description, as we are now entering a country which riveted my attention from the first, exhibiting not mere patches here and there of capable land, but, as I proceeded, many considerable tracts presented themselves susceptible of great improvement. On entering the lovely vale of Kylemore, I found myself at once amid the spirited improvements which are

now carrying on by Mr. Eastwood. Had I known of any inn within a few miles of this place, where I could have remained, I should have endeavoured to make myself better acquainted with this gentleman's plans and their results, for what I now saw before me greatly interested me. Mr. Eastwood seems to have set to work in good earnest, having built for himself an excellent house, sheltered by the mountain of Bencoona, and secured an estate beautifully situated in the gorge of the vale, and watered by a fine stream, which appeared to possess a convenient fall for machinery. As I passed, the plough was turning up some apparently deep alluvial soil in the flat of the vale and near the river, and in all directions the work of reclamation was going on with a spirit which excited my admiration. As I was taking a general view from an eminence near the road, Mr. Eastwood himself passed me on horseback, but so rapidly that I had no opportunity of introducing myself had I felt it right to do so. One circumstance particularly struck me as I gazed upon this property,—whether, being so much in the very gorge of the vale, it might not be exposed to a continual draft of air, and sometimes to the rush of violent gusts and storms as they blew from the not far distant ocean, or from the recesses of the lofty mountains by which it was enclosed? It was, however, to me a cheering sight. I saw here in actual progress what I should be myself compelled probably to attempt, though on a much humbler scale; and here, as at Cliefden, I could not but render due honour to the man who “had caused the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose.”* To the tourist and

* Isaiah, xxxv. 1.

the angler this vale will afford a rich treat. The scenery as I saw it, on a fine calm autumnal day, quite filled my imagination, though I must confess it is not easily satisfied. I felt as if there was nothing more to wish for; here was a combination of all that was glorious and lovely in landscape. I had hitherto seen no lake in Connaught to compare with this : generally, these broad expanses of water lie naked and unclothed amid the stony recesses of the hills, or repose on the dark and flat surface of the bogs ; but here Nature seemed to have asserted her claims, and many a bosky dell and woody steep gave clothing and richness to the views. I observed oak, holly, hazel, birch, and mountain ash, flourishing in considerable masses, showing that Ireland was once abundant in timber and copsewood, and ought to be so again. To the angler these lakes afford, I am told, excellent sport. The river Doorus running through Kylemore and Poulacoppul Loughs, communicates with the sea a few miles further to the westward, and quantities of salmon and white trout thus find their way into these waters. Passing onwards, near the head of the lake, several things attracted my attention. To the right the wild and solitary vale of Glen Ina opened, and the deep ravine of the Kylemore river was seen receding into the mountains of Benabola, shut in by immense and inaccessible crags. Here, at the head of the lake, where the two vales meet, are several hundred acres of very promising land. A gig was waiting on the road, and two persons were in the act of measuring and surveying the said lands as I passed. It is a portion of the D'Arcy property, and on sale. Here the mountains recede, and the sun has free play upon the gentle slopes. Passing the solitary dwelling of the Rev. Mr. Duncan,

who, as I drove by, was in his garden, and appeared to be quietly contemplating the sublime scene before him, my eyes were attracted on the left hand, as we ascended the hill, by a large but low thatched building, which, with its square courtyard and ample gates and internal windows, reminded me of the pictures of some of the Eastern caravanseries. It was in truth a wretched place, yet I could see that it was partly inhabited. On enquiry, the post-boy informed me that it had been the hospital and poor-house during the famine. I caught a passing view of the lonely Lough Fee on my left, and to the right were the rugged mountains of Joyce's Country. Before me was the harbour, or inlet, called the Killery, deep, narrow, and running inland for some miles, closed in by wild cliffs and dark mountains; among these, to the north-west, towered the highest in Mayo—the desolate and, even on such a day, the cloud-capped Mweelrea. Far to the westward the sun gleamed on the Atlantic, and the lofty headlands of Clare Island were seen dimly in the distance. I gazed long upon this scene, for it is one I shall never forget. It was among these wilds, where the ocean washes the rocks of Tully, that the Blake family retired, and from their lonely retreat, “Renvyle,” scattered around them the blessings of knowledge and civilisation. Mr. Blake was a great, though too enthusiastic, an improver — introduced a superior stock both of cattle and sheep — led the way in the reclamation of waste lands — showed what science and industry could effect; and, like a good steward of what God had given him, abode among his own people. That pleasing little work, entitled “Letters from the Irish Highlands,” was the joint production of this gifted family.

Skirting the romantic shores of the Killery, we at length reached the miserable village of Leenane. Strange it is that, where nature is so lovely, man should be so degraded and so wretched. The maimed, the blind, the naked, the widow and the orphan crowded around me as I alighted from the car; and one poor fellow, lame and crippled in almost every limb, followed me for nearly a mile, as I walked forward to enjoy, unmolested if possible, the surrounding scenery. Having distributed what change I had about me to the various claimants at the village, I turned to the poor fellow and regretted my inability to relieve him. "God bless your honour," was the affecting reply; "sure it can't be helped then:" and back he turned, so patient and resigned, and thankful for "the kind word," that it smote upon my heart, and I returned with him to the village, and sent him away happy — if, poor fellow, happiness could ever visit one so afflicted and utterly destitute. I was now in Joyce's Country, so famed for a race of men tall as the sons of Anak. I was not, however, fortunate enough to meet with any of these giants as I passed through their country. I saw much wretchedness, though nature had provided ample sources of profitable employment. Lord Sligo's slate mines in this neighbourhood have been discontinued; and the fisheries, I was informed, might employ many more hands. Besides the Marquis of Sligo and other members of his family, an Irish Protestant archbishop and a dean have residences, if not estates, in this district, and within a short distance of Leenane. As we travelled along the Vale of Errive, on the banks of its beautiful river, my eye caught a little picture not inappropriate to the scenery around. Close by a sacred well (St. Joseph's,

I believe)*, a comely young woman was kneeling at her devotions. A low wall surrounded the spot, and though we passed close to her, she did not even for one moment suffer her attention to be diverted. There is a fine salmon fishery in this river, and there are occasional patches of very improvable land. The Wood of Errive, which skirts the left bank of the stream for a considerable distance, forms a pleasing variety; and though, as "a wood," it would be little thought of in England, yet here it is described by the people in terms so glowing as to raise a smile. It is a standing proof, however, if proof were wanting, that timber as well as grass and corn are natural to the Irish soil. After passing the Bridge of Errive, from which we catch the last view of the bold mountainous district we had been traversing, the road to Westport gave rise to no particular remarks. On the Derrycraff river, as far as the eye could reach, there appeared to be a large and useful tract of country, with a sufficient fall for drainage. It was evening ere I reached Westport. It struck me as a thriving town, the streets broad, and planted on either side with trees, the country around well cultivated and wooded, and the scenery (crowned by the towering peak of Croagh Patrick) interesting and peculiar. Lord Sligo's beautiful domain adds greatly to the delights of this vicinage. His park has about it much of the English finish; a lovely stream flows through it, and the views from the mansion to the westward are said not to be surpassed either for beauty or variety. The inn is

* These pilgrimages to sacred springs were at one time common in England, and traces of the old superstition may still be seen in Cornwall. Polwhele, in his history of that county, I think, speaks of them. See also Vallancey, "*De Rebus Hibernicis*."

not far from the park gates, and much superior to those we generally meet with in districts so remote.

I was much pleased with Westport and its neighbourhood, and felt that there were many inducements there to attract a settler. The hand of industry had already been active, and cultivation on a large scale had been carried on for a considerable length of time. "Forty years ago," says Mr. Griffith, in his very interesting "Appendix to the Fourth Report of the Commissioners on the Nature and Extent of Irish Bogs," "the mountains in the neighbourhood of Westport were in a state very similar to that which the mountains of Tyrawley and Erris now exhibit. Many thousand acres of these once dreary wastes are now in a comparatively high state of cultivation." "The system of improvement usually adopted in the mountains of Westport was, first to cut off the water from the mountain above, next to plough up and burn the surface, and afterwards to lime it. The whole of the lime that has been laid out on the face of these mountains was carried in panniers on horses' backs from the seashore at Westport, where alone it can be procured." It appears, also, that the noble proprietors of these large tracts have been successively liberal in granting leases on such terms that the tenant had every stimulus to exertion, feeling that he would enjoy the fruits of his industry. Such men are not only benefactors to their country, but they thus best secure their own interests; and if, owing to circumstances over which he had no control, the Marquis of Sligo has not reaped all the benefit he had ~~the~~ right to expect for the encouragement thus given to social progress, he may at least console himself with the reflection, that most disastrous results have in most cases followed where similar exertions

have not been used. The fertilising effects of lime on the soils in this district were first proved by a series of extensive and well-conducted improvements by the late marquis; and it was by his fostering care and enterprising spirit that Westport, once a mere fishing-village, has now become one of the most thriving and populous towns of the West. Mr. Griffith states, in a note to his Report, that eighty years ago there was but one small field, of eight acres, of green ground, between Castlebar and the sea-coast, and these were around Westport House; and within forty years the roads to the West did not pass Castlebar. Looking, then, at the improvements that have taken place — the raising of mere fishing-villages into large towns — of smuggling stations into harbours for the accommodation of an increasing commerce — the exchange of dangerous paths across lofty mountains and deep morasses into some of the finest roads in the empire — the extensive reclamation of bogs, and the fertilising of barren hills; when all this is before our very eyes, is it too much to hope that the time will come when the present depression will pass away, and this glorious country take its proper position among the nations, and be, as God has indeed intended it to be — the very gem of the sea. That trade is languishing — that enterprise is at a stand-still — that men's hearts are failing them — that every thing is, in fact, retrograding at present — common observation must convince any one that will form an impartial judgment: but let them be patient for awhile; the ample resources, the immense capabilities, of the Sister Isle are beginning to attract observation in England; and I cannot but venture what some may call a rash prediction — that *Ireland has seen her worst days.*

CHAP. III.

CROAGH PATRICK. — THE SAINT. — ANTIQUITIES.

To visit Westport, and not to ascend Croagh Patrick, would have been equally inconsistent with Saxon spirit or antiquarian enterprise, and I lay claim to a little of both. In the afternoon, therefore, always by the by the best time of the day for such excursions, as the state of the weather is then generally settled for weal or for woe, I took a car, and jogged along pleasantly by the shores of Clew Bay to the village of Morisk, the spot from whence the ascent is generally made. The drive is interesting. The country inland is broken into many rocky elevations, offshoots or buttresses of the great mountain beyond; while the numerous inlets of the bay, its green islands, and the distant mountains of Ballycroy, formed at every turn pleasing combinations. Yet, over all, rose the towering peak of Croagh Patrick, in solemn, solitary grandeur: no rival mountain was near it; it stood out in the pure welkin, sole monarch of the scene. Dismounting from my car, a boy of about fourteen proposed himself as my guide, and, without losing a moment, we started. At first, the ascent is easy. A clear and plentiful brook cheers you on for one third of the way with its murmurs and prattlings, now rushing over its bed of gravel, now throwing itself down the ledge of some opposing rock. Leaving the brook, the well-worn path conducts you through tracts of slippery

bog to the eastern side of the mountain, whence, verging further still to the left, you reach the first station, which is southward of that huge cone, which, resting on vast superincumbent masses of mountain, seems here to soar into the skies. This is called "the station of the kid," and here the votaries commence their *dhurru*, or penance, by seven times crawling on their knees round a rude enclosure of stones, within which also they repeat the necessary prayers. So my guide informed me. His traditions, however, were enunciated so by rote, and there was such an affectation of believing himself thoroughly what he had the hardihood to press upon my credence, that I suffered him to run himself out without interrogation or interruption. He gave me the whole history of St. Patrick and the serpents, and of the saint's two attendant boys, and of the "tussle" with the "gíneral" of the serpents, and of the miraculous virtues of the saint's bell and its magic clapper, and how the "gíneral" of the snakes was cast into Loughnapecke, which being too small to contain him, he was consigned to the more extensive waters of Loughna Corra; where, even at this day, when the lightnings flash and the thunders roll round the summit of the mountain, he may be seen disporting himself, and splashing with his tail, till the whole air is thickened, and the surrounding lands deluged with the spray. From the first station, the ascent becomes difficult. The path is a kind of trench, either worn by the rushing of waters from above, or by the feet of those thousands of pilgrims, who for ages past have resorted to this spot to seek atonement for sin, by severe acts of penance and propitiatory prayers for the mediation of their great saint. This path insures a penance of itself; for it consists of loose stones, which

continually impede progress, and must inflict no ordinary punishment upon those who have tender feet, or are afflicted with those trifling maladies which are inseparable from a shoe and boot wearing generation. There is nothing for it in ascending this mountain, but a stout heart and unhesitating resolution. Once begin to rest, and you will be for ever resting; better to do as I did, if you can, to commence the ascent leisurely, and not to stop till you attain the summit. There you will generally find a native ready to welcome you with a drop of the genuine "crathur;" to partake of which even a teetotaller could not object, after three miles at least of such rugged ascent. But, had it been six miles, the view from the summit would amply have repaid the fatigue. I will not attempt minutely to describe it; it is beyond the powers of minute description. Take the large map of Ireland I have sent you, and draw a circle around this mountain, as far as you think the human eye can range, and you may have some idea of the glorious prospect I now enjoyed. The objects were infinite, and the view embraced one of the most interesting and picturesque tracts, I had almost said, on the world's surface. Clew Bay at your feet, with its 366 islands; Ballycroy, Currawn, and Achill, to the north; westward, the vast Atlantic, its wild waves lashing the bold cliffs of Clare Island, Inishbofin, and Inishturk; eastward, the undulating and boundless plain of the great limestone basin of Ireland; southward, the fair barony of Morisk, green with eternal verdure, and watered by sparkling lakes and streams; and in the same direction, far and far away, ridge upon ridge of distant mountains, among which stood prominently forward the twelve peaks of Benbeola and the gloomy

heights of Mweelrea. As I stood entranced, gazing at the spectacle before me, a light cloud suddenly enveloped the summit of the mountain, and all was hidden from my sight, as with a curtain. As it gradually opened, however, and passed away, the effect was exquisitely beautiful. Portions of the vast landscape only were at first visible — now the bay below, with its green islands — now the tranquil surface of Loughna Corra, with its desolate and solitary shores — now the town of Louisburgh, with its little bay, and meandering river, and smiling environs. No person who is alive either to the beauties or sublimities of nature, should neglect visiting this justly celebrated spot, if business or pleasure ever bring him into the county of Mayo. I do not say that it exceeds Slievemore in Achill, but it is more approachable. The view from Slievemore may excite more awe; that from Croagh Patrick will give most pleasure. The latter is enlivened by the admixture of towns and villages and inhabited plains; the former is grand, desolate, and solitary. The area, or platform, on the summit of the Reek, as Croagh Patrick is generally called by the natives, is not much less than an acre, and bears abundant marks of the estimation in which it has been held, and the object of many of those who ascend to it. The station here is, also, a mere enclosure of stones. On a projecting shelf, my guide informed me, the holy candles and other appendages of the altar are placed when mass is said; and here also votive offerings are deposited by the devotees. I was also shown St. Patrick's bed. If he ever slept on that rude heap of stones, he must have set an example of practical self-denial, and undergone a species of penance which few of his votaries in the present day would be inclined to

imitate. But a truce to these traditions, which, of course, find no credence but among the uneducated and ignorant. I lingered long in this interesting spot; indeed, the sun was almost touching the waves of the far Atlantic with his chariot-wheels, when my guide warmly pressed me to descend. This we were not long in effecting; and, after ordering the car to be ready in half-an-hour, I proceeded to inspect the ruins of the Augustinian abbey of Morisk. Following the course of the same stream which I have before mentioned, as having its source in the mountain above, I soon came in view of the buildings, which are not far from the sea-shore. A portion of the church is all that is left, and the superior masonry of the walls would evince that it had been an establishment of some importance. It was, I believe, founded or restored by the O'Malleys, a great family in these parts. Returning to Westport, the tide filled the bay and its numerous creeks, adding much to the beauty of the scenery. I observed many villas as I drove along; a sure sign of prosperity, past or present. The harbour appears to be most inconveniently situated as regards the town, from which it is, by the road, at least two miles distant. Lord Sligo's enclosed domain separates them. Newport would appear, to my unaccustomed eye, to afford far better anchorage and shelter for shipping. It was impossible to visit Croagh Patrick, and not to carry the mind back to the times of that celebrated saint. The legends of those days are unworthy of notice, but history is not silent on the subject. St. Patrick, it appears, was sent to Ireland by Pope Celestin, after Palladius had failed in his mission. At the time of his arrival, there were only four bishops in the island, and, of course, heathenism prevailed. Like our own Augustine, he set himself manfully to

work, and succeeded in converting all the fierce tribes to Christianity. He built 700 churches and many monasteries, created dioceses, ordained 150 bishops and 5000 priests, and, assisted by missionaries only less zealous than himself, soon changed the whole aspect of the country, and humanised the inhabitants. Colgan, a Franciscan, who wrote the lives of the Irish saints, says, "the kingdom of Ireland was formerly much more flourishing, abounded much more in cities, towns, and villages, and in wealth. Almost every town had noted monasteries, and even villages had sometimes their peculiar bishops." In St. Patrick's time there were 300 bishops in Ireland, the reputation of whose great learning drew a vast number of divines from Italy, France, Germany, and Britain; nay, even Picts and Saxons resorted thither; "Ireland being," says Colgan, "the general storehouse of literature for Europe, and the general sanctuary of religious persons." "The city of Armagh," says O'Connor, in his Dissertations, "had no fewer than 7000 scholars studying at the same time within its university;" and we learn from Bede, "that many of the higher and lower order of Anglo-Saxons, A. D. 664, retired from their own country into this island, some to indulge their taste for reading, others to lead a life of stricter observance and solitude." "At that remote period," says Sir Richard Hoare, "these religious establishments (the monasteries) were highly beneficial. Hither the learned resorted; here the ancient manuscripts were collected; here religion and learning found a safe and peaceful asylum. The monks imparted their knowledge and doctrines to numerous students, who disseminated them widely over the world: neither have their public services been confined to the

cloister, for they were extended to the cultivation of the wildest deserts and most barren wilderness, and thus, by the sanctity of their morals, and by their enlightened understanding *within* doors, and their industrious labours *without*, they at once instructed, civilized, and benefited mankind." It is indeed impossible to travel through this interesting country, without marking innumerable vestiges of its ancient prosperity and importance. To the eye of the antiquarian there is a continual treat. The cromlechs and rude pillars, the tumuli and carnedds, which are dispersed over the country, prove the remote period of its inhabitation. Next we observe the humble oratory, the stone-roofed chapel, and those inexplicable buildings, the round towers. "*Turres ecclesiasticæ*," says Giraldus, "*quæ more patrio, arctæ sunt et altæ, necnon et rotundæ*;" but for what especial purpose they were built is left to mere conjecture. Then there are those curious earthen works called Rathes, attributed by tradition to the Danes, —

" Haunted by fairy elves,
Whose midnight revels, by a forest side
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees, while overhead the moon
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the earth
Wheels her pale course."

Of these some are partly sepulchral, partly places set apart for the councils or conferences of the chiefs; some, again, are military works, having ramparts and outworks. Sir R. Hoare's "*Journal of a Tour in Ireland*" abounds with ingenious remarks on Irish antiquities; but, with him, one cannot but lament that so little has hitherto been attempted to illustrate the topography of this interesting country. In religious buildings, this

island will bear a comparison with any part of the British empire. "Although," says Sir Richard, "monastic architecture may fall short, both in design and good execution, and be obliged to yield the palm of superiority to the sister kingdoms, yet Ireland, in her stone-roofed chapels, round towers, and rich crosses, may justly boast of singularities unknown and unpossessed by either of them."

CHAP. IV.

WESTPORT.—MONALJEMAN BOG.—BALLINROBE.—CONG.—
RODERIC O'CONNOR.—INVASION OF IRELAND.

I HAVE been again much gratified with my excursions to-day in the neighbourhood of Westport. What may be done by patient industry is here manifested on every side; and I am convinced that persons wishing to leave England may here find an asylum to suit their inclinations and their means. I was informed every where that the Marquis of Sligo is a good landlord, and willing to grant such terms to men of enterprise and capital as will enable them to do well even in the face of all present discouragements. Westport will doubtless share in the prosperity of Galway; and it is impossible not to foresee that the great changes now visible on the world's surface will act favourably for the West of Ireland. The spacious and safe harbours of this coast—their immediate proximity to the Atlantic—the large tracts of improvable land—and the facilities now offered for renting or purchasing at prices scarcely higher than those of Australia or Canada, must have the effect of inducing many to pause ere they seek in the Antipodes what they can find so much better close to their own shores. At each step I take in this land, so highly favoured by nature, my ideas of its desirableness and capabilities increase, and I look with wonder at the general state of

neglect and poverty in which some of the finest and most beautiful districts in these kingdoms are suffered to remain. Nationally speaking, the Irish are neither deficient in talent nor in industry. During my progress I have met with a larger average of well-informed intelligent persons than I have been accustomed to meet with even in my own country. One reason may be, that the people here are more polite and more communicative;—they certainly are occasionally most pleasant travelling companions, and abound in those little courtesies and pleasing attentions, particularly towards strangers, in which the English are too often so lamentably deficient. I will never believe that the English are really unpopular in Ireland: every mile he advances must convince the traveller to the contrary. Whilst I was in Connemara, I heard universal regret expressed by the inhabitants of all grades, that the English had not bought up the Martin Estates. “All we want,” said an intelligent man whom I met and conversed with at Flynn’s, near Ballinahinch—“All we want is English capital and English spirit, and,” added he, more earnestly, “*English justice*, so that a poor man may get a fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work.” And this, indeed, seems the great evil of the country: the proprietors, as a body, seem to have little or no money, and therefore the people have no work. Where all the money is expended, and there must be large returns from so many fine properties, no one can or will tell. All the wealth is extracted, but little or none seems to return. If the estates are generally under mortgage, and so overweighted with encumbrances of various kinds that the nominal possessor is incapable of performing those positive duties which, by the laws of God, are

inseparable from the possession of the soil, the state must interfere; properties so situated must change hands, and the labouring population be rescued from a state of misery and degradation which, as it exists in this country, certainly has no parallel. This was the wise view taken by the present government, when they passed the Encumbered Estates Act; and a more politic, a more *merciful* measure, it is impossible to conceive. Such, too, I believe to be the general opinion of the majority of enlightened Irishmen themselves; indeed, I seldom, when the subject was discussed, heard a contrary sentiment from any person whose opinions had any weight. I have heard much of the causes which have reduced Ireland to its present state — that all is not the mere fault of the law, as certain political economists assert. I am convinced something must be attributed to the natural improvidence of the people; and this, too, much aggravated by the restless political state in which they have been for centuries. Yet still there is no doubt, that the state of the law, as it has affected property, has been a great evil, and that it is the imperative duty of our legislature, equally in England as in Ireland, to remove all those impediments to the free transfer of land which are derived from and only fit for the feudal ages. The causes that have operated so injuriously upon Ireland are various — uncertainty of tenure; limited powers of sale and exchange, in cases of entails and foundations; defective leasing powers, and the enormous legal costs of transfer, and the uncertain position of the purchaser as to what he really buys, as regards his obligations thereupon. The relative position of landlord and tenant would appear strange to an English ear. We learn from the report of the Land Occupation

Commissioners, that "it is admitted on all hands, that, according to the general practice in Ireland, the landlord neither builds dwelling-houses, nor farm-offices, nor puts fences, gates, &c. in good order, before he lets his land to a tenant! The cases where a landlord does any of these things are exceptions! In most instances, whatever is done in the way of building and fencing is done by the tenant, and in the ordinary language of the country, dwelling-houses, farm-buildings, and even the making of fences are described by the general word "improvements;" which is thus employed to denote the necessary adjuncts to a farm, without which, in England or Scotland, no tenant would be found to rent it." Is it to be wondered at then, that, under such circumstances, sudden ejectments are considered in the light of a legal robbery? *Sic vos non vobis edificatus* is literally carried out; and no man feels secure in the possession of the dwelling he has himself erected, or the improvements he has so long toiled to effect. From the present state of the law, the landlords of Ireland have no encouragement to spend money on the improvement of their estates. So long as improvements follow the ownership of the land, it is decidedly the interest of the tenant for life to seek any other source of investment for his money. All the landlord generally aims at is to extract from his property for the time being all the enjoyment and profit he can. This is of itself a very serious check upon enterprize, whether as regards the landlord himself or the monied public. There ought to be a general power to charge improvements on the inheritance; and then, many of the large, but neglected estates in this country, might be placed in a condition to attract the attention of capitalists, and there would not be wanting

men who would settle upon and improve the lands. That entire state of neglect in which I saw many fine properties was disheartening; I could not help fancying a thousand causes that did not probably exist; nor was I surprised at the disinclination felt by landed speculators to have any thing to do with a country where the population was starving, and the lands lying waste. Wherever, as at Westport, a spirited landlord has set to work, and, regardless of all legal obstacles, has laboured to the utmost for the improvement of his property, the results have been great; but they would have been greater still, if the old feudal disabilities had been removed, and every species of enactment devised which could unfetter the proprietor, and allow him to deal fairly and profitably with the public.* Again: as I travelled through the country the immense proportion of waste lands struck me as extraordinary; and when I saw that a large portion of these might be rendered productive, I felt there must be some cause for such blameable neglect of God's gifts. On inquiry I found that in too many cases the waste lands are in strict settlement, and the proprietors (incapable themselves of finding money for their reclamation, were they so inclined, which, from the reasons above stated, they seldom are,) had, moreover, no power of sale. This state of things at once afforded a clue to the matter and I ceased to be surprised at the quantity of land in a state of nature. We may now, however, reasonably hope that the aspect of things will be changed. The late Act for the Sale of Encumbered Estates will meet the difficulty; and the capitalist may invest his money

* On this subject see Professor Hancock's "Impediments," &c.

and the farmer his means and his intelligence, secure of reaping the full benefit, as far as an unexceptionable title and possession can secure it. According to Lord Devon's able Digest, "there is scarcely any subject investigated by the Commissioners upon which the evidence is so concurrent as that of waste land reclamation, with a view of increasing remunerative employment for the labouring population. Mr. Griffith's valuable report and table show that Ireland contains

	Acres.
Waste land improvable for tillage	- 1,425,000
Waste land improvable for pasture	- 2,330,000
Total improvable	- 3,755,000
Waste land unimprovable	- 2,535,000
Gross total	- 6,290,000

The state of the law, then, has been one principal cause why nearly four millions of acres of waste land in Ireland have been unreclaimed. *The landlord* had little or no inducement, as all his improvements followed the settlement of the land; *the tenant* was virtually barred from attempting it, for the law laid down this principle—"a tenant has no right to alter the nature of the land demised by enclosing and cultivating waste land included in the demise." If he does so it will be waste! And the landlord has no power to relieve the tenant; for though there is a statute giving to tenants in tail the power of granting leases for thirty-one years, or three lives, yet that power shall not extend "to any lease of any lands or tenements which have not been most

commonly letten to farm, or occupied by the farmers thereof, by the space of twenty years next before such lease thereof made, nor to any lease to be made without impeachment of waste." It is impossible to dive into the purpose or meaning of such legislation as this. But to finish the picture: *the capitalist* could not buy, because most of these waste lands are in strict settlement, and the proprietors have no power of sale; but even where the lands were not so situated, he was discouraged from purchasing by other weighty considerations. "The cost," says Mr. Hancock, in his excellent work *, "of tracing sixty years' title, searching for judgments, paying stamps on conveyances and searches, and preparing the conveyances, is so great, as nearly always to exceed the entire value of the waste land." The real oppressors of Ireland were surely those who imposed upon her such heavy fetters as these, bound down her energies, and paralysed every effort at improvement. This state of the law acted most mischievously, too, on the moral character of the people; and we have no right to be surprised at the amount of disaffection and crime which necessarily accompanied such a state of things. I have gone the more fully into this subject, as it removes one great cause of suspicion amongst those who occasionally cast their eyes to these shores with the idea of settlement or investment. Now that we can perceive *why* the sister country has existed so long in this disgraceful state, we are satisfied that the causes may be removed; and as we know also that the eyes of the legislature are open to these facts, and that measures have been already taken,

* Impediments to the Prosperity of Ireland.

and others are in progress, to remove them, our confidence waxes stronger, and our hope of a better state of things becomes more established. The only check that can now impede a rapid progress is the present low state of agriculture. It becomes a serious question whether, when the waste lands, by a short and inexpensive process, become his own, the proprietors can, by outlay and labour, extract a fair and remunerative return from them. This is a point for subsequent observation and inquiry; it is one which I will not attempt to determine till further data are in my possession, and also the opinions of practical men here, who are actually engaged at the present time in the work of reclamation, and therefore can speak with certainty as to the result in their own cases.

I was not willing to prosecute my researches further west or north till I had seen more of Lough Corrib and its shores, deeming those districts as most promising, from the great facilities of communication with Dublin and England which they will shortly possess: in consequence, I proceeded to Cong, a small town situated at the head of Lough Corrib, on the narrow isthmus which separates it from Lough Mask. The first few miles out of Westport are through a country well cultivated and pleasing. Mount Browne, which we passed in our way, is a lovely retreat, situated near the beautiful lough of Kinlooe. The domain is well timbered; and that, coupled with the abrupt undulations of the surface, has a doubly striking effect in a country so generally destitute of shelter. Passing the

picturesque ruins of an old castle, on the right, so situated as to overlook a wide extent of country, a dreary and wild district succeeded, stretching far away to the east in extensive flats, and bounded on the west by an advancing arm of the Connemara range of mountains, called Slieve Bohaan, which attains an elevation of nearly 1300 feet. This at present desolate tract is called the Monalieman Bog, and contains upwards of 6000 English acres, including several lakes and small pools. The moment my eye glanced upon this wide extent, I could not but acknowledge its capabilities. Here improvement would have fair scope. The mountains, though forming a beautiful boundary to the west, yet were not too near, and there appeared a good fall for draining, either into Lough Mask on the south or the river Aille on the east. This large bog, at its highest elevation, is not more than 89 feet above Lough Mask, and into that lake it principally discharges its waters. Long hills of gravel, heathy and barren, and covered with bog from one to two feet deep, intersect it; and the substratum is, for the most part, a red sandstone. But a limestone soil bounds it to the north, and abundance of limestone gravel may be procured from the east side of the river Aille. This stream is navigable for several miles, to Lough Mask, for boats not drawing more than six feet of water; and, as the lake itself is navigable to the river Robe, which will soon be open to Ballinrobe, the district will at once command a good market, and find a ready, cheap, and easy supply of all necessaries. The communication also now forming from Lough Corrib to Lough Mask will greatly improve and open out this part of the country; and it is therefore well worthy of the attention of those who

look for an open healthy location with a certain prospect of an increase of value. Close to Monalieman is another uncultivated tract, called the Cloghar Bog, in extent nearly 2000 acres, possessing the advantage of a subsoil of limestone. Its elevation is about 72 feet above Lough Mask, and it discharges its waters into that lake. A sum of about 2000*l.* according to Mr. Bald's opinion, would thoroughly drain this bog, and render it fit for any of the operations of agriculture. In taking a view of this now bleak and inhospitable district from an eminence near the road, I could not help regretting the expatriation of so many thousands of the inhabitants, who, by the application of so comparatively small a capital, might have found means of employment in the land of their fathers, and increased the power and resources of our common country. Leaving this wild but interesting district, we pass along the shore of a long narrow lake, and soon arrive at the river which unites the Loughs Carra and Mask. The country, though flat, becomes here more woody and sheltered; pleasing views of the various lakes peep out now and then, while the Slieve Partry mountains, rising from the western shores of Lough Mask, seem to offer a barrier to further progress on that side. Approaching Ballinrobe, the bare limestone rock appears to occupy the greater portion of the surface; but the condition of the live stock and excellent crops produced, wherever the plough or spade can penetrate, justify, as I was informed, the apparently high rents at which land is here let. Long before we reach the town, the tall octagonal tower of the Roman Catholic Chapel is visible, surmounted with many crosses, and forms a striking object to all the country round. It was the market day.

For several miles we met the people returning home, many forming picturesque groups, the costume of the women being generally the blue cloak and scarlet petticoat. Notwithstanding the numbers that had left, the town was full when I arrived, and it was altogether a busy bustling scene. No one who has not visited these remote districts can have a conception of the noise, the jabbering, the perpetual movement in an Irish market. Every one seems as busy as if the welfare of the world depended upon him solely, busy, that is to say, so far as shouting and talking, and violent gesticulation, can convey that idea. You would think, when two men are merely bargaining, that they were going to wage desperate battle on the nonce, — such earnestness, — such slapping of hands, — such bawling in each other's ears, — such retreating and advancing, — such scorn, — such defiance: and yet it is all in good-humour. "It's the way wid 'em," said my post-boy, as I expressed my apprehensions; "God bless you, sir, they're good friends entirely." Well, they may be good friends, and I do not the least doubt it; but a little admixture of English self-possession and quietude in doing business would be no disadvantage. A Saxon friend of mine, who attended a fair in the west with some cattle to sell, was determined to alter the system, at least in his own case. He named his price — a fair one — and refused to engage in any higgling. "Take them, or leave them," was his only answer to bargaining customers, and he returned home with the full money in his pocket, and the consciousness of having broken through an absurd and unseemly custom. Ballinrobe is pleasantly situated on a river, which, flowing by the pretty village of Hollymount, falls into Lough Mask

about two miles below the town. The improvements now carrying on to afford an internal communication will much benefit Ballinrobe, as this place will form a kind of mart to distribute every necessary article of consumption to a large district lying to the eastward. There is good land, though much of it rocky, in this neighbourhood. These parts suffered, however, severely in the year of the famine, and lost, by death and emigration, a great number of inhabitants. Passing "the Neale," a respectable mansion, now the residence of the noble family of Kilmaine, we reached Cong late in the evening. This village, and its neighbourhood, are full of interest to the antiquarian, the geologist, and the admirer of nature, whether in her wilder or her softer garb. The abbey, of which considerable portions remain, particularly the very beautiful gateway, was of the remotest antiquity: some assert as early as the seventh century. In fact, Cong was, from the earliest ages, the residence of the powerful and warlike kings of Connaught. Most conveniently placed between the large lakes of Corrib and Mask, it afforded an easy communication by water with the greater portion of their territory, and it guarded one of the principal passes into the far west, among whose inaccessible rocks and mountains a speedy and effectual refuge might be sought in the event of any powerful invasion. Cong was once a large and flourishing town, if we may credit tradition, and had several churches, of which traces are said still to remain. Its abbey afforded a peaceable retreat to the last of the kings of Ireland, Roderic O'Connor. Foreseeing the future conquest of his country by the warlike Normans, invited over by Dermot Mac Morogh, king of Leinster, and having expe-

rienced the undutifulness and ingratitude of his sons, he retired to this abbey, where, spending the remainder of an active life in quiet preparation for another, he died, at an advanced age, about the year of our Lord 1198. My early morning's ramble through these sacred precincts afforded me much matter for reflection, connected, as they are, with all of good or evil that has since happened to this island. It was in consequence of a noble act of Roderic O'Connor that the English were first introduced, and acquired possessions on the eastern coast. It appears that Dermot, king of Limerick, was a barbarian and a tyrant. Giraldus de Barri, a contemporary writer, thus describes him:—"He was tall, and of a large body, a valiant and bold warrior in his nation, and, by reason of his continual war-shouting, his voice had become hoarse (*ex crebro continuoque belli clamore, voce raucisonâ*). He was a great oppressor of his nobles, advanced the low-born, was hateful to his own people, and detested by strangers." Giraldus sums up this description in a few remarkable words:—"Manus omnium contra ipsum et ipse contrarius omni." This tyrant had ravished the wife of O'Rourke, a prince of Breffne, which, added to his many other oppressions, roused the indignation of Roderic, who, marching against him, drove him from his kingdom, and forced him to take refuge in England. Here he craved the protection of Henry the Second, and at once enlisted that ambitious monarch in his favour, by swearing allegiance to him, and by promising to aid his long-cherished design of bringing the various principalities of Ireland into subjection. It appears that the indignation of Henry had been repeatedly roused by the acts of aggression perpetrated against

the Welsh by their Irish neighbours; and even so early as A. D. 1155, a bull had been procured from Pope Adrian, authorising the subjugation of that turbulent people on the first opportunity that occurred. The document itself is preserved in Rymer's *Fœdera*. Relying upon the assurances of the English king, and the favourable edict which he had issued, Dermot, by many persuasions and liberal offers of territorial aggrandisement, at length persuaded Richard, son of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Striguil and Chepstow, to undertake his cause, upon condition, also, that he would give his daughter Eva in marriage to the said Richard, and secure to him the reversion of his kingdom. While, therefore, preparations were making for an expedition in the ensuing spring, Dermot repaired to St. David's, on the Welsh coast, "where," says Giraldus, "languishing for a passage, he comforted himself as well as he might; sometimes drawing, and, as it were, breathing the air of his country, which he seemed to breathe and smell; sometimes viewing and beholding his country, which in a fair day a man may ken and descry." The first attempt, however, upon the independence of Ireland was made in the year 1170. Robert Fitz-Stephen, accompanied by only 130 of his kinsmen, 60 men in armour, and 300 archers and footmen, landed near Wexford, where, being joined by Dermot and some native troops, they speedily took possession of Wexford and the surrounding lands. Roderic O'Connor, king of Connaught, marked these proceedings with uneasiness, and made a private treaty with Dermot, whereby he was secured in the possession of Leinster, on condition of acknowledging Roderic to be chief king of all Ireland, and sending home the English invaders as soon as tran

quillity was restored in Leinster. Emboldened, however, by some partial successes, Dermot, ever a traitor, resolved to wreak his vengeance upon Roderic, and accordingly wrote to Earl Strongbow to remind him of their engagement. As some of the expressions used in this letter are peculiar, I offer no apology for transcribing them; and if you wish for more detailed information on the events of this interesting period, you will find them briefly but clearly narrated in the introduction to Sir Richard Colt Hoare's "Journal of a Tour in Ireland," A. D. 1806. "If *you* do well consider," says Dermot, "and mark the time as *we* do which are in distress, then we do not complain without cause, nor out of time. For we have already seen the storks and the swallows; the summer birds are also come, and with the westerly winds are gone again. We have long looked and wished for your coming, and albeit the winds have been at east and easterly, yet hitherto you are not come unto us. All Leinster is already yielded unto us, and if you will speedily come away with some strong company and force, we doubt not but that the other four portions (Connaught, Munster, Ulster, and Meath (?)) will be recovered and joined to this fifth portion. Your coming, therefore, the more speedy the more grateful, the more hasty the more joyful, and the sooner the better welcome." Strongbow landed in Ireland, in the Bay of Waterford, with a chosen body of troops, on the vigil of the feast of St. Bartholomew. He besieged and took the city of Waterford by storm, after a fierce and bloody contest, in which many natives of distinction were slain, and Reginald, prince of the Danes, and Malachy O'Feolain, prince of the Decies, were captured. We may date the subjugation of Ireland from this event, though

many vicissitudes attended the future encroachments of these invaders. Dermot, insatiate in his vengeance, and flushed with success, laid waste the territory of O'Rourke, prince of Meath, his ancient enemy; upon which, Roderic O'Connor, thinking "that, as his neighbour's house was set on fire, his own might shortly suffer the same fate," sent messengers to Dermot MacMorogh with letters to this purpose: — "Not caring for thy oath, nor regarding the safety of thy hostages, thou hast insolently passed thy bounds: I am to require thee to retire, and withdraw these excurses of strangers, or else, without fail, I will cut off thy son's head, and send it thee." Dermot answering that he would not desist from his enterprize until he had subdued all Connaught, Roderic made good his threat, and ordered his son's head to be cut off and sent to him. Henry II. landed in person at Waterford, in October, 1172. Then came Dermot MacCarthy, king of Cork, and voluntarily submitted himself unto the king of England; as also Donald, king of Limerick, Donald, prince of Ossory, and Malachy O'Feolain, prince of the Decies. But the haughty Roderic, king of Connaught, would not step beyond the Shannon to greet the English monarch; wherefore Hugh de Lacie and William Fitz-Aldeline were sent to him, and administered the oath of allegiance. "There was no one within that land," says Giraldus, "who was of any name or countenance, but that he did present himself before the king's majesty, and yielded unto him subjection and due obedience." Still, however, Roderic continued in arms for the defence of his country; and taking advantage of some successes against the English near Cashel, he invaded the province of Meath, and laid the country waste to the very walls of

Dublin. Deserted, however, by the other native princes, and harassed by a perpetual warfare with his undutiful and rebellious sons, he retired in bitterness of spirit within the cloistered walls of the abbey of Cong, where he died, A. D. 1198, at the advanced age of eighty-two years. These events have had so great an influence on the destinies of this unhappy land, that I have penned this hasty sketch, with a view of turning your attention to the history of Ireland generally, as one unparalleled for a succession of atrocities, and of incidents of the most exciting and extraordinary description.

CHAP. V.

CONG. — GOLDEN BAY. — CORNAMONA.

TAKING possession of the only two rooms in the quiet little inn conducted by Mr. Vanderburgh, than whom I have seldom met with a landlord more truly respectable and obliging, I determined to make Cong my headquarters during the term of my stay in this part of the country; and I had no reason to regret my choice. Every information and facility were given freely in aid of my researches. Early in the morning I sallied forth to inspect this ancient metropolis of kings. Alas for the strange vicissitudes to which all earthly power is subject! Cong is now a mere collection of miserable cottages, clustering round the beautiful ruins of its once magnificent abbey, and adorned with a curious cross in the centre of the street, still attesting the pristine importance of the place. I was ushered into the abbey by an ancient crone — fit guide to so desolate a scene! so haggard and withered was she, so sad an instance of the melancholy inroads of time and wretchedness upon the human frame. The gateway is beautiful — so perfect, indeed, that it might have been only chiselled yesterday; but within, the remains of this noble structure present the aspect of a mere charnel-house, blocked up with rubbish, and strewn with human skulls and bones. As seen from Mr. Lambert's grounds, which include, I

believe, the cloister area and a portion at least of the monastic gardens, the ruins appear to far more advantage, and they here present specimens of masonry peculiarly chaste and elegant. By this gentleman a pretty cottage has been erected, in appropriate style, close to the spot once occupied by the cloisters ; and by surrounding his little domain with a high wall, he has succeeded in preserving at least this portion of the sacred precincts from further damage and desecration. The abbey was nearly enclosed by the river, which, running for a considerable distance underground from Lough Mask, emerges about half a mile above Cong, and, after supplying several large mills with an inexhaustible water-power, finds its way into Lough Corrib. In the centre of the stream, close to the salmon weir, is a ruined building, formerly the fishing lodge of the abbey, from whence, if tradition is to be credited, a wire communicating with the abbot's chamber, caused a bell to ring whenever a fish was taken. There is around this abbey a mingled air of fertility and wildness — wood, rock, water, and pastures of the brightest green, are so commingled as to form an endless variety of lovely scenery ; and when all the advantages of this locality are considered, it is not wonderful that kings and priests made it their favourite resort. That it will again rise into importance, when the new arrangements for internal communication are completed, no one can reasonably doubt. After breakfast, accompanied by a gentleman of intelligence and consideration in the neighbourhood, I embarked in a boat with four stout rowers ; and quickly emerging on the broad waters of Lough Corrib, we steered to the Cornamona river, which, after flowing through the wild valleys of Joyce's Country, empties

itself into the lake at its extreme north-western point. As we glided swiftly over the crystal surface, new objects of interest arose continually on every side. Passing between the rocky islets of Ardillaun and Scollopaun, we neared the shore; and penetrating the recesses of Golden Bay, landed there to inspect the judicious improvements which are effecting under the inspection of the spirited lessee, Mr. L——, of Cong Abbey. I was surprised, on walking over the farm, to observe the natural fertility of the land; for at a distance, as we coasted along, the hills, as they sloped with a rapid descent to the margin of the lake, had a somewhat desolate and neglected appearance. A great portion of this northern shore of Corrib is the property of the Earl of Leitrim. On ascending to the highest point on this farm, we enjoyed, from the area of one of the old Danish forts, a magnificent view. To the north the waters of Lough Mask extended to the far horizon; to the south, the broad expanse of Corrib lay at our feet, studded with green islands, its shores broken by rocky promontories and rising into lofty hills. From hence, too, we could distinctly mark the line of communication which is to unite these two large lakes; and gazing as we did upon a vast extent of country below us, the mind could not but speculate upon the rapid changes which must soon come over this fertile, but hitherto almost unknown region. Descending from the fort, I noticed some fine cattle of the short-horned breed, whose condition spoke well for the quality of the pasture. The fields here are large, and fenced in by high and substantial stone walls; a circumstance which, however desirable to the occupier, does not certainly add to the beauty of the country. Mr. L—— has

erected a comfortable house and out-buildings, in a pleasant spot, commanding a sweet view of Golden Bay and its solitary island ; and a little below, a corn mill of most substantial workmanship, which he has supplied with water from two small lakes to the northward. A more delightful location for a settler than this I can scarcely conceive ; everything is made to his hand, and the future prospects of this district are certainly most encouraging. This farm was to be let for what I considered a low rent, and for a long term. Leaving Golden Bay, we skirted the shore, passing the small isle of Bowry to our left, and to our right the green and cultivated heights of Dooroy and Ardaun. Before us now opened the deep but fertile vale of Dooghta, hemmed in by bold mountains ; among which, close above us, rose the rocky heights of Benleva. This mountain is of trap formation, and on its eastern base the great limestone field of Ireland terminates. Never shall I forget the lovely island of Inishdoorus ; its pastures are of the true green of Erin, and its gentle slopes contrast beautifully with the wild scenery upon which we are now opening. Island after island now cluster round the promontory of Cloonbrone ; and so peculiar is the scene, that it is difficult for an eye accustomed only to the tamer scenery of England to believe that it is not gazing on the hills and valleys of some far distant clime. Indeed, as I believe I have before remarked, there is a character in Irish scenery peculiar to itself ; in no part of Great Britain have I discovered any striking resemblance to it. Skirting the rocky shores of Doorus, we at length entered the mouth of the Cornamona river, and directing our course up the valley which it waters, we again moored our boat at the bridge, erected, I believe, by

Alexander Nimmo, near to a limekiln and a few huts, not worthy the name of a village. Apart from the beauty of the scenery, there is much improvable land in this district; and passing over the ridge which divides this vale from that of Bealnabrack, the eye of the improver sees much to attract his attention. Some of the mountain pasture in this neighbourhood is greatly prized, and lets for high rents. The promontory of Doorus and Cloonbrone, as you will observe in the map, reaching far into the lake, forms two bays, into each of which flows a considerable river. Limestone is abundant, and the turf of Coramona is of excellent quality. The romantic residence of Doon is in this neighbourhood; its woods rising abruptly from the lake to a considerable elevation, constitute a striking and beautiful feature in the landscape. I did not extend my ramble far in that direction. We sat down on a rocky ledge, near to a spring that bubbled up at our feet, and there partook of a quiet repast, in the full enjoyment of the lovely scenery around us. Before returning to our boat, we sauntered along the road that leads to Maam, and there encountered in our path two of those itinerants called "Bible-readers," who are paid principally, I believe, from English contributions, and whose business is to enter the cottages of the poor, and instruct them in Protestant doctrine, and to point out to them the errors and superstitions of the faith they profess. We entered into conversation with these men. They did not pretend to much success at present; nor could they say that the population received them gladly. The elder of the two (the younger was a mere stripling for so grave a purpose) was well read in his Bible, had been sufficiently tutored in his points for argument or

disputation, was fluent in speech, and well up to his business. His main object among the people, he said, was to wean their minds from all superstitious reverence to externals, to restore the sacraments of the Church to their real scriptural signification, and, moreover, to denounce the system of Popery as a fraud. I did not, I must confess, enter entirely into all his views; he seemed to me, in his endeavours to avoid one error, to be in danger of running into another. The violent protests of such men shock oftener than they convince. It is necessary to deal tenderly with prejudices, and fiery denunciations are more calculated to raise opposition and hatred, than to win men from error to the truth. I was afterwards informed that much excitement had been caused in the neighbourhood by these proceedings; but to what extent they had succeeded in gaining real and conscientious converts to the Protestant Church, I could not ascertain. Again threading the lovely mazes of the Coramona river, we emerged into the lake, and soon found ourselves once more standing beneath the venerable ruins of Cong Abbey.

CHAP. VI.

THE PIGEON HOLE. — ROSS HILL. — NEW CHURCH. — ROSS ABBEY. — LOUGH MASK CASTLE.

My next excursion was by land. I left Cong in a car early in the morning, and after driving for some distance through a district, whose surface was one continued limestone rock, except where a scanty soil occasionally put forth patches of the liveliest verdure, I reached that curious natural fissure known by tourists as "the Pigeon Hole." Descending into the earth by about sixty steps, you find yourself gazing with astonishment and awe at the subterranean chasm through which the vast waters of Lough Mask empty themselves into Lough Corrib. A picturesque group of females were washing linen at one end of the cave, while at the other the waters were seen to flow rapidly along, till lost in obscurity beyond. I noticed several fine trout swimming in the current. This place has been so often and so well described, that I will not loiter here, but hasten forward. As we approached the comparatively neat little village of Rosshill the rain fell in torrents, and I was glad, while my post-boy took shelter under the thick shade of a plantation, to hurry onward and take refuge in a cottage, the door of which was invitingly open. Here, as ever in this hospitable land, was the "kindly welcome" given, the chair dusted, the fire replenished,

and those numberless little attentions accorded, which render Ireland to me so attractive, notwithstanding all its squalidness and its misery. The occupants were a widow woman, her two daughters, one about thirteen years of age, the other nine, and a poor creature who, like myself, had asked for shelter from the storm, and who, half clad in tatters, cowered, or rather squatted, in the corner of the ample fire-place, in that peculiar manner so common in this country. The cottage was neat for an Irish cottage — the floor was rudely flagged — the roof weather-tight — the door ample in its dimensions — the window whole, and twice the usual size. Everything around gave striking evidence, that well directed influence was at work here, and that some potent arm was stretched out, to rescue this rural quiet spot from the surrounding scenes of degradation and of want. The family were Roman Catholics. After the poor widow had told her tale of woe ; how she had lost her husband by an accident, just as her increasing family most demanded his protection and his exertions, how kind her neighbours had been to her after her bereavement ; particularly one gentle lady, whose heart could ever sympathise with suffering, and whose purse was ever ready to relieve it (I could have wished the widow's story twice as long, so much did it interest and affect me) ; after she had finished, I entered into conversation with her elder daughter, and found her intelligent, well taught, and singularly modest and pleasing in her manner and her answers. I gathered from her, that Protestants and Catholics in that village attended the same school, under the supervision of their respective clergymen ; that the schoolmaster was a Protestant, and clerk of the new church, built by the Lady

Elizabeth Clements ; that there was no warfare carried on between either the clergymen or their flocks ; and that the charitable acts of the fair guardian of this remote spot, had no reference to difference of creeds. As the clouds now began to break away, though there was still the rumbling of distant thunder among the far off hills, I left the cottage, and soon found myself at the park gate of Rosshill House, a seat of the Earl of Leitrim, the great proprietor of the district. This is an ancient inheritance, and descended to the two daughters of the last of the Berminghams, as co-heiresses, one of whom married the Earl of Leitrim, the other the Earl of Charlemont. My principal object being to visit the new church, I was directed, on entering the park, to take the path to the right, and was soon brought within view of this beautiful offering to the pure worship of God. It is small ; not cruciform, but surmounted at the east and west ends by crosses of stone. The belfry is of the ancient, simple style. The building occupies the summit of a gentle knoll, and around it is the churchyard, enclosed by ornamental paling, and planted with appropriate evergreens. The view, as you stand beneath the belfry, is wild and solitary. Solemn groves and lonely pastures are around, and in the distance are the waters of Lough Mask, and lofty ranges of wild mountains. The door of the church was open, and I entered, pausing, however, at the threshold to admire the extreme beauty of the interior. The roof was open, and of elaborate wood-work, prepared, I was informed, in London, at great cost. The principal timbers spring from well executed corbels, and are of oak. The font and pulpit are of stone, the altar of carved wood. Near the latter is also a stone sedilium

in the thickness of the wall. The font is of an early style, and adapted for immersion, resting on one massive octagon pillar. The church is lighted by five lancet windows on one side, and three on the other, all filled with stained glass. The eastern end is particularly handsome. Above, is a circular window in twelve compartments, having a centre ; and, below this, three others of lancet form, of which the middle one represents the Crucifixion. Over the altar is an inscription, " Worthy is the Lamb to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. v. 12.); and on the left of the altar is a window, on which are finely painted figures of Moses, Elias, and St. John the Baptist. The east end, and the three steps leading to it, are paved with encaustic tiles, and the remainder of the floor is of red and black tiles. The seats are suitably massive, and all open, containing about forty persons. The congregation consists of six of the police force stationed in the neighbourhood, and the inmates of the great house. The clergyman is the Rev. Mr. O'Grady. The church is open for prayers every morning at half-past eight, and on saints' days at eleven o'clock. If to witness so much misery in passing over this fine island, has been a shock to every sense, yet here was a proof, how much could be done by individual exertion to obviate it. If half the self-sacrifices which have so nobly contributed to make Rosshill what it is, were submitted to from the same sense of duty elsewhere, what an immediate social revolution would take place in this unhappy country ! Truly it was delightful to witness the successful workings of a gentle and unobtrusive philanthropy, undertaken in a quiet corner of the world, where the simple

consciousness of doing good as an offering of gratitude to the author of all good, could be the only stimulant to exertions, so nobly and so unostentatiously carried out. It appears that the noble lady alluded to, had the advice and encouragement of a friend in her design of building here a fit temple, in which she and her people might worship the God of their fathers, according to the rites of the reformed faith. On a plain slab near the altar I observed the following inscription : —



IN MEMORY OF
H. R. S.,
WHOSE EXAMPLE,
ENCOURAGEMENT, AND ADVICE
PROMOTED THE BUILDING OF THIS CHURCH.



HE DIED BEFORE IT WAS COMPLETED,
XVII FEB. A.D. MDCCCXLVI.
FOR THY SERVANT DEPARTED THIS LIFE
IN THY FAITH AND FEAR,
WE BLESS THY HOLY NAME, O LORD.

The Hon. Mr. Skeffington here commemorated was a relative of the founder of this church, and her most intimate friend; and one too, the remembrance of whose many excellent attainments and good qualities will long live in the hearts of all who had the pleasure of knowing him. He died at Rome, just as he was entering on his career of usefulness, and was there buried.

With reluctance I left these interesting precincts, and

at a slow pace made my way across the park, towards the spot where I was told were the ruins of the old abbey of Ross. The further I advanced, the more gloomy did the scene become. Not a human being crossed my path—no groups of cattle—no flocks of sheep were to be seen in the rank pastures, and no sound broke in upon the almost unnatural stillness save the hoarse croakings of an ill-boding raven. The air was oppressive. Heavy clouds, surcharged with rain, hovered over my head, and among the distant mountains was again heard the voice of the mighty thunder. I hurried forward. The path was scarcely perceptible, for the grass was long and rank, and wet with the preceding rains. At length, within the deep recesses of a grove of huge trees, I could trace the roofless gables of an ancient building. I paused, for it was a singular scene of utter desolation: it was manifest that no part of this ancient establishment had escaped destruction, save portions of the church. Looking upon the place in all its solitary wildness, it was difficult to conceive that it had ever been the abode of living men; and that the busy scenes of life, for such even a monastery presents, had ever been enacted here. The aspect of this spot was as if it were not only totally deserted, but unknown. With a feeling of awe I approached nearer to the ruins. The dark clouds and the thick foliage cast an unwonted gloom over the place. Around the roofless building were many graves unfenced from the inroads of cattle or other animals. Many a cross of wood and stone was there—many a sculptured head-stone, overgrown with moss, rose from amid the green mounds, beneath which slept the mouldering remnants of many generations. Cautiously picking my way, I at length gained the other

side of the ruin, and stood in front of the ancient porch. It had been once handsome, and bore many marks of skilful workmanship; but the hand of destruction as well as of time had been busy here. The entrance was half choked with rubbish and masses of disjointed stonework. The noisome nettle and the henbane luxuriated, and out of the deep fissures in the walls grew masses of ivy and the spreading branches of an elder tree. Turning from the building, the view was still wild and solitary, but beautiful and unexpected. The waters of Lough Mask washed a pebbly strand not far from the spot where I stood. Two wooded islands cast their deep shadows on the lake; and far to the left, bounding the broad expanse, rose the mountains of Kilbride and the towering cliffs of Glenbeg. As I gazed, heavy drops of rain began to fall, the clouds seemed heavy with mischief, and rolled onwards in long dark masses. In vain I looked around for some cottage or shed, into which I might hasten for shelter; the rain began to fall heavily, and a flash of lightning, succeeded rapidly by a clap of thunder, which reverberated awfully among the rocks and woods, drove me at once through the half choked porch into the interior of the ruins, perchance some friendly corner might there present itself. I found myself in the nave of the ancient conventual church. No portion of the roof was left: a large ash tree grew in the centre, luxuriating in the rich accumulations around; and over the side walls thick masses of ivy clustered, affording me a precarious shelter. Standing close to the wall I looked around. What a scene of barbarous neglect! Could it be possible that from this place, so desecrated, the voice of prayer and praise could ever have ascended to the throne of the Most High? Could holy

abbots and reverend fathers ever have consorted here, devoting their days to acts of Christian worship, and their nights to pious vigils? My blood ran cold as my eye pierced the gloom and rested upon objects the most abhorrent and disgusting. Large stones thrown from the walls were scattered around, and among them were the sad relics of bodies once instinct with life. I counted no less than sixty skulls! To remain was impossible. Though vivid flashes of lightning threw a momentary glare around, and loud and continued bursts of thunder proclaimed the tempest at its height, I hastily left the spot, and as I gained the open glades of the park felt much relieved, that this my first and probably last visit to the old abbey of Ross was achieved. The mansion of Rosshill is a mere dilapidated pile, with no architectural pretensions; the situation is not pleasing, and the trees and evergreens grow in such untrimmed luxuriance around it, that it is half hidden from observation. There are several excellent sites for a new house, and it is to be hoped, that the many capabilities of this domain will be developed by some spirited proprietor. I was informed that it is a joint possession of the two earls above named, which fact will account for its present neglected state. Rejoining my car in the village, we drove on through a limestone country, varied occasionally with rich pastures and corn fields, till we arrived at the spot where many gangs of hardy labourers were cutting the canal of communication between Loughs Mask and Corrib. Here, as at Galway, I stood contemplating with admiration the unwearied efforts of the workmen as they pursued their gigantic task. Pursuing our course on good though narrow roads, and through a country somewhat flat, and divided into large

and fertile enclosures fenced with stone walls, we at length neared the shores of the lake, and on suddenly turning to the left, saw before us the tall and interesting fortalice known as Lough Mask Castle. A grove of lofty ash trees shelters it to the east; on the west, the waves of the lake break against its walls. A large and apparently well cultivated farm surrounds it on the land side, and a large farm-house of superior pretensions, with ample agricultural buildings, has been erected about a stone's throw from the ancient dwelling. This tower or castle is evidently one of those embattled houses which were erected in the time of James I., and probably on some forfeited estate regranted by the crown. Many such strong houses are scattered over the country, particularly in Ulster; for James, in all his dealings with Ireland, proved himself a better friend to the peaceable inhabitants, than any of his more warlike predecessors. His grand object in dealing with this turbulent people was, to promote security and the arts of peace. He abolished the Brehon law or custom, by which every crime, however enormous, even murder itself, was punished only by fine. He also abolished the absurd customs of gavelkind and tanistry. The former is thus explained in Hume's History of England:—"Upon the death of any person, his land, by the custom of gavelkind, was divided among all the males of the sept or family, legitimate and illegitimate; and after partition made, if any of the sept died, his portion was not shared out among his sons, but the chieftain, at his discretion, made a new partition of all the lands belonging to that sept, and gave every one his share. As no man, by reason of this custom, enjoyed the fixed property of any land; to build, to enclose, to plant, to cultivate, or to

improve, would have been so much lost labour." As the Irish had been universally engaged in the rebellion against Elizabeth, a resignation of all the rights which had been formerly granted them to separate jurisdictions was rigorously exacted. Even a resignation of all private estates was required; and, when they were restored, the proprietors received them under such conditions as might prevent, for the future, all tyranny and oppression over the common people. The Irish were removed from the hills and fastnesses, and settled in the open country; husbandry and the arts were taught them; a fixed habitation secured, and plunder and robbery punished. "Such were the arts," continues the historian, "by which James introduced humanity and justice among a people who had ever been buried in the most profound barbarism. Noble cares, much superior to the vain and criminal glory of conquests, but requiring ages of perseverance and attention to perfect what had been so happily begun." It was at this auspicious period, according to the dates found in the building, that Lough Mask Castle was erected; but how little in the opinion of the founder, the benevolent designs of James were as yet perfected, one glance at the arrangements of this massive pile will at once convince us. It absolutely bristled with defences. Every angle but one, and that towards the lake, was fenced with strong projecting machicolations, and every portion of parapet between the embrasures of the battlements was pierced with shot holes. The castle was one compact and nearly square building, measuring probably, outside the walls, about seventy feet by fifty. A strong wall of defence surrounded and guarded it on the land side; but, towards the lake, the rudely formed and mas-

sive walls, founded on the solid rock, and strengthened by immense buttresses of unhewn stone, bid defiance to attack. Approaching the gate of the outer wall, which was also machicolated and flanked by shot holes, formerly rendering approach dangerous, I entered and found myself in a kind of irregular courtyard, around which, built against the walls, were numerous outbuildings, intended, doubtless, for the use of a garrison, for stables and necessary offices for a large establishment. Before me, on the eastern side of the tower, was a strong door, giving admission to the interior. I passed through it into a guarded vestibule, then into a small outer hall, having a doorway on the right hand, leading to the porter's lodge, and another in front leading into the great hall, and from thence doubtless to the kitchens, cellars, and other offices appertaining thereto. The great hall, if such indeed it was, was half filled up with rubbish from the roof which had fallen in; below were traces of spacious cellars hewn out of the solid rock. Returning to the outer hall, I found there, opposite to the entrance of the porter's room, an ample archway, conducting to the grand staircase, and certainly this staircase was a curious and elaborate piece of workmanship. It is spacious, cylindrical in form, and of stone, and leads from the basement story to the battlements. Ascending this, I soon found myself in the grand living apartment. It occupied, with the exception of a small room that had been partitioned off from the projection of the staircase to the opposite wall, the whole space of the interior, and was upwards of thirty feet square, the walls that enclosed it being of great thickness. On the north side of this room, were two capacious fire-places with chimney pieces of stone, curiously sculptured, bear-

ing the dates of 1615 and 1618. On one was carved the names of "Thomas Bourke," "Elles Butler." The room had three windows strongly mullioned, and exhibiting traces of being formerly guarded with iron bars, both upright and transverse. From these windows were obtained the most extensive and lovely views over the lake, and the distant country to the north and west. The walls being splayed back, gave great space, and admitted abundance of light and air into the room; indeed, few modern drawing-rooms are equal to it in this respect. The western window, which was the largest, commanded an uninterrupted prospect over the lake, bounded on the other side by the mountains of Kilbride, and towering over these, in the far distance, the peaked summits of Connemara. Immediately in front, was the island of Ballcencholly, which can also boast its castle and its abbey. As I stood in the deep recess enjoying this scene, the sun darting one gleam on the precipitous sides of Glenbeg on the opposite shore, disclosed those romantic arms of the lough, which, penetrating far into the interior of the country, and divided only by that wild mountain tract, approach the grand and solitary region where the almost inaccessible lake of Nafooeey spreads its dark and lonely waters. While taking the dimensions of this room and making my observations, a sudden storm again swept from the mountains, throwing for the time a veil of mist over the lake and distant scenery. The rain descended in torrents, and looking for shelter, for the room in which I stood was open to the roof, I espied in the recess of the south window a small, narrow doorway, within which I hastily retreated. It had manifestly been formed for concealment, and a sliding panel in the wainscoting had doubtless ori-

ginally given access to the places with which it communicated. As there was no chance of the storm soon passing away, I determined to explore the place, and to discover, if possible, the uses to which this suspicious-looking portal had been applied. One very slender arrow slit had alone lighted the narrow staircase, which I now began cautiously to descend. Ere I had accomplished half a dozen steps it was perfectly dark. I groped my way; a step was wanting, and I had nearly been precipitated downwards. At length there was a turn to the right, and a round hole scooped out of the thickness of the walls caused a rush of air into the passage, and gave a vague and uncertain light. At the bottom two or three steps were again wanting, and clambering down cautiously, I found myself in a spacious vault, having no apparent egress but the one by which I had descended. Was this the dungeon of the fortalice, and this the scene of some of those barbarous cruelties, so often enacted in that age of lawless licence and feudal strife? This private passage had doubtless served many purposes. It admitted of the perpetration of every kind of outrage, without the remotest chance of discovery. Persons obnoxious to the lords of the castle might be dragged from the chamber above, and here immured or summarily executed. In case of siege, a private outlet, either for aggression or escape, might be gained hence to the contiguous lake. In fine, the imagination had here full play; and, in the various surmises and minute investigations, perchance I might find additional signs to confirm my ideas. Time fled rapidly, and the storm had passed away when I again stood in the large chamber. The sun now shone out, and the waters of the lough glittered in his beams. I ascended the

higher portion of the staircase, and found myself treading the battlements of this "armed house." It was a glorious view that met my gaze. In days whether of warfare or tranquillity, one could not surely select a more desirable situation. The approach of an enemy might be discerned for miles, and there was no eminence near to give an opportunity of aggression. For a peaceful hall it had every necessary recommendation. Water, rock, and wood, — islands, lakes, and mountains, — all contributed to the loveliness of the scene, and I felt as I stood on those battlements, that it augured ill of the taste and good judgment of the proprietor, to desert, and suffer to go to ruin, a residence replete with beauties and advantages. The platform of these battlements extends round the building, presenting everywhere arrow slits and shot holes, and places from which the inmates might annoy an enemy, though sheltered themselves. The roof itself, now fallen in (*proh pudor!*), was probably raised on rafters, for on the exterior walls is a range of stone water pipes for carrying off the rains, which, projecting on every side, is highly ornamental. Much gratified with my day's excursion, I left the interesting precincts of Lough Mask Castle, and as the evening was drawing in, we drove rapidly towards Cong. The lands I passed through appeared fertile, stone walls predominated as fences, which gave a cold aspect to the country; but, judging from the stock and the appearance of the crops, I should say, that a sound system of agriculture is making progress in this fine district.

CHAP. VII.

LOUGH CORRIB.— A STORM.— INCHAGOIL.— TEMPLE-A-NEEVE.
— OUGHTERARD.

THE next day being devoted to an aquatic excursion on Lough Corrib, and an examination of one or more of its islands, I was early astir, and after breakfast paid a parting visit to all that remains of the old abbey of Cong. The beautiful and perfect gateway I again lingered long to admire. It stood there unchanged, since the warlike Roderic O'Connor passed through it, to exchange a life of restless warfare and blighted ambition, for that peace and tranquillity, which a life of quiet piety is alone calculated to bestow. From the date of its first establishment in the seventh century, what vicissitudes must it have witnessed — what men of might and renown, in circumstances whether of weal or woe, must it have admitted within its walls! How often, probably, has the wild clash of arms resounded in its peaceful courts, scared religion from her altars, and disturbed the musings of the lettered monk in his dim cloisters! The contemplation of these sad but holy scenes suggests many thoughts, and gives rise to speculations, which to indulge in here, would grate fearfully upon the puritanic ears of modern days; but I confess myself one of those, who view the general

reckless spoliation and destruction of these religious establishments with sorrow and indignation. At the period of their erection, they were the only safeguards for peace or security; within their walls learning still lingered, however faintly; the inmates were the only real cultivators of the soil; they alone fed and educated the poor, moderated the pretensions of the arrogant chiefs, kept lawlessness in some check, punished and restrained crime by the exercise of spiritual power and discipline, and they stood between the people, and a state of the most fearful and hopeless barbarism:—Had maladministration of their funds or their powers been proved against them—had their practices given scandal to the rising intelligence of the country—had their doctrines and their usages become unpopular—~~was~~ there no other plan to adopt, but barefaced plunder, injustice, and extermination? Some of them at least might have been preserved and reformed; men more acceptable to the altered state of society might have been elected to their offices; their revenues, by a quiet and wholesome transition, might have aided in the general education of the people; and what were once mere monastic institutions, confined in their objects, and perhaps in some cases useless, if not exceptionable in their practices, might have been continued, in all their territorial and architectural integrity, as colleges for the rich, seminaries for the poor, hospitals for the sick, and quiet retreats for the pious and the learned. The moral effect of such an appropriation who can doubt; and a heavy responsibility attaches to those, who thus sacked revenues given by the pious of former ages for public use, and who misapplied them to their own godless and selfish purposes. I left the abbey, and was

soon proceeding rapidly down the clear and powerful stream, which, after a long subterranean passage, hastens to pour its waters into Lough Corrib. The morning was bright and cheering, and the well-wooded and picturesque banks of the river looked charming as we passed along. Soon we gained that lovely seat of Lord O., known as Ashford Lodge. The houses, manifestly in a state of neglect, stood on a lawn to our right; and a large and romantic domain, sheltered and ornamented by many varieties of trees and masses of evergreens and flowering shrubs, environed it as far as the eye could reach. Several vehicles were on the gravelled front, the hall door was open, and there appeared to be a stir within. "Are they about to repair the house?" said I to the rower nearest to me. "Is it reparin', your honor manes?" replied Mike Corrigan; "by all the powers, I believe they're going to sell intirely. My lord is short of money. I heerd Mr. J. say it's all going to be set up for sale in the Lumber Estate Court. By dad, then, I would wish yer honor would buy it; it would be fine times for the like o' us, could we get English gentlemen into the country that had money in their pockets, and the heart to spend it." I thought so too, and had there been time (though no purchaser), I should have followed the example of the strangers with the vehicles, and inspected the house and domain. The park not only runs for a considerable distance along the banks of the river, but also follows the northern shores of the lake for nearly a mile. On the opposite side I observed a succession of fine woods and plantations surrounding the lovely retreat of Strand Hill, the property and residence of Thomas Elwood, Esq. The occurrence of these two fine domains on

each bank of the river, renders the egress from the lake into the Cong waters, peculiarly and strikingly picturesque. Leaving the river, we rowed through a lovely cluster of seven small islands, the largest of which, Illaunree, is about three acres in extent. Clearing these, we soon found ourselves on the broad expanse of this Lough, the largest in Ireland excepting Lough Neagh, which spreads over 98,000 acres, and is fourteen miles long and eleven broad. Corrib, however, is in every sense an inland sea; and looking from the position we were now in, towards the east and south, the vast surface stretched away to the horizon, giving, where the shores are low, the idea of unlimited continuity. To the westward a spacious bay ran far inland, meeting the powerful streams of the Bealnabrack and Coramona valleys before mentioned, which are fed also from the other numerous glens of Joyce's Country. When we left Cong, nothing could be more promising than the state of the atmosphere on a fine morning; and when I looked at the small and ill-constructed boat in which I was called upon to embark, but few misgivings at the moment crossed my mind, seeing all so calm above and below. But I would advise all future travellers not to launch themselves on these waters except in a stout four-oared boat. I had given no orders on the subject, and the result was, my setting forth in a kind of cockleshell concern, manned by two boatmen only. We had not left the seven islands behind us more than a quarter of an hour, when a low wailing sound like distant wind, and suspicious gusts, began to creep over the water, and ruffle its hitherto serene surface. Surprised, and perhaps a little startled, I cast my eyes westward, and saw heavy clouds like those of the preceding day, when I

was at Ross Abbey, advancing in masses from the heights of Benleva and that lofty range which divides the Maam district from the distant Glen Inagh. It had been a halcyon calm, as was soon proved. Having resided occasionally among lake scenery, I was well aware of the often dangerous nature of the navigation of these loughs, and how frequently sudden squalls from the mountains have overwhelmed the incautious adventurer, and consigned him to a watery grave. It was not, therefore, without anxiety that I looked ahead, and saw, but at too great a distance for affording immediate shelter, the large island of Inchagoil. Another island, Cleenillaun, was to our right; but the boatmen said, if the squall came down, we could not face the waves so as to make good our retreat thither. Our only chance, therefore, was to make Inchagoil. And verily the squall did "come down" in right good earnest. Thinking and conjecturing were now useless; it behoved us to be stirring and active, for the wind began to blow in fearful and fitful gusts, and the angry rippling of the surface of the lough, increasing into yet more angry waves, promised, ere the storm was over, a too close resemblance to the ocean swell. Our little bark was tossed on the now rolling billows; one side rising high out of the water, while the other seemed as if it would dip below it. The men, nothing daunted, stripped to their shirts, and, rolling the sleeves over their elbows set right earnestly to work. Anxiously I looked upwards, perchance any break in the clouds might give promise of the storm abating: but no; sullen, leaden-coloured masses hurried along; and, as I cast my eyes around, not an island, not a distant mountain, not a vestige of the shore was soon to be seen, but all was as wild and

cheerless, as if we had been tossing in the midst of the far Atlantic. Hark! what an awful peal of thunder was that bursting on the heights of Benleva, and resounding through all its precipices and glens! The storm now rages above us. Oh! when shall we reach Inchagoil? It was indeed an awful scene, and one I cannot easily forget. There we were, tossing helplessly, almost hopelessly, in the centre of that wide expanse — the waves below greedy, as it were, to swallow us — the wild war of the elements above eager to overpower us. Our only chance was to keep the boat close to the waves; but then the surf, which now began to curl the tops of the billows, often broke over the bow of our boat, and caused us to ship large quantities of water. My office it was to bale this out as quickly as I could; and, in truth, I was not sorry to thus occupy myself, as it diverted my observation from the confusing scene around us. The heavy rain too now began to pelt us bitterly; but I had so well provided myself with “patent appliances” for these emergencies, that so far I was scatheless. I was thus also enabled to cover the clothes of the boatmen with my ample cape, so as to secure the poor fellows the comfort of a dry jacket when the turmoil was over. “Hurroo!” said Mike, turning round for an instant, and directing his gaze over the bow of the boat; “by the mortal, there is Inishannagh Cliff, and that is but a stone’s throw from Inchagoil. Arrah Pat, darling, pull strong on your side, and we shall be safe under Berry Island in the strike of a minute.” It was a long minute certainly; but everything in this lively land allows for exaggeration. Thus an Irish mile and an Irish acre are both on an enlarged scale. It was a lovely little bay which we

were now entering, and so protected by a small island to the westward, called Berry Island, that the water was comparatively smooth, and we now felt in perfect security. The clouds, too, began to break away; the rain ceased; the sun darted his warm and cheerful rays once more upon the scene, and my thoughts were lifted up in thankfulness to the Most High, and mentally with the Psalmist did I exclaim, "Give the Lord the honour due unto His name; worship the Lord with holy worship. It is the Lord that commandeth the waters: it is the glorious God that maketh the thunder." The island of Inchagoil, on which we now landed, near some ruined cottages, has no bold or prominent aspect from the lake. It stretches along, as you view it at a distance, as one continued ridge of low elevation; but, on exploring it, I found that it was not strictly so. At the eastern and western extremities it rises, in the latter almost perpendicularly, to an elevation of nearly eighty feet from the level of the water. Though the cottages seemed deserted, yet occupants there were, certainly, on the island; for, as usual in Ireland when a stranger approaches, some persons engaged in a distant field left their labour and came to give us the greeting. On inquiry, I found they were persons employed by the lessee, Mr. L., to till the lands and watch the stock. Not being able, however, to extract any information from them, I declined their services, and proceeded alone on my tour of discovery. This island of Inchagoil was one of those taken possession of by the early Irish saints, and is supposed to have been honoured by the actual presence of St. Patrick. To him, certainly, the church existing here in ancient times was dedicated, and the ruins still bear his name. Leaving the shore, and pro-

ceeding into the interior, I soon arrived at some ruins *, inconsiderable as to size, and rendered more so in appearance by the rank luxuriance of briers, weeds, and nettles by which they were half concealed. Making my way as well as I could through these obstacles, I entered under a small but perfect archway into an enclosed area, about eighteen feet long by thirteen wide. What this has been, whether the outer entrance to monastic buildings, or a portion of a church, I could not decide ; but the former is probably the case, as I found the scanty remains of St. Patrick's church about a stone's throw from the building I was now examining. Opposite to the first archway is another, but smaller, which doubtless led to other buildings, as considerable foundations are visible, and heaps of dressed stones are scattered about the adjoining ground. Both these doorways are circular. Climbing without difficulty the highest portion of the walls, which are fortunately held firmly together by the clinging ivy, I contemplated from thence a magnificent prospect. Not a cloud was in the heavens ; the atmosphere was clear and bright ; and the eye wandered with delight over a scene, the vastness and the lovely combinations of which it is difficult to conceive. To the south-west, mountain towered above mountain, peak above peak ; deep valleys perforated their recesses, and the arms of the lake were seen penetrating far inland, till lost in distance and gloom. To the south and east the waters of the lough stretched far away, and sometimes it was difficult to trace the low eastern shore on the horizon. Many islands varied the now placid

* These remains are designated in the Ordnance Survey, " Temple-a-Nevra."

bosom of the lake, and immediately before me rose the hill of Glan, on the western shore; below which, and stretching over a bold promontory, was the wood of Annagh; and far away in the same direction was visible the smoke of Oughterard, rising from its lovely vale. But the attempt to describe such scenes is vain: I know I must have wearied you with such frequent, but very imperfect details; but to travel through such a country as this, and altogether to pass by its picturesque beauties, would be unjust. Besides, I feel that persons of warm imaginations would never think of settling in the flats of Holland or Lincolnshire, though the richness of the land and the pecuniary benefits to be derived therefrom are most manifest. Beautiful scenery will have its influence on the mind of an emigrant, and I do not therefore think that my frequent notices of the general aspect of the country will by any means be lost. There is a freshness, a cheerfulness, a constant variety, a union of softness and grandeur about the scenery of the West of Ireland, that, to my mind, make it one of the most desirable places of settlement in the world. The more beautiful, sometimes, the more unproductive, is often remarked; but not so here. The mountains often afford the finest pasture, and the valleys the richest soil. "And so," thought I, as I gazed around the island, "this is one of the chosen seats of early learning and piety in this extraordinary land. These saints truly had good taste, and chose well; and why not? Why should not the successors of St. Patrick rejoice in these lovely and sequestered spots, as well as pagan philosophers in the shades of Academus? If superior learning did not guide the possessors to choose the most eligible sites for their establishments, one might be in-

clined to doubt their pretensions." From my position I had a bird's-eye view of the whole island; and could I do otherwise than gaze upon it with interest? Nine centuries ago, the feet of Ireland's great saint and true benefactor had probably trod this strand; there, where a solitary remnant, a massive doorway, stands alone in the centre of a small cemetery, was the spot where, like Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury, he fixed his staff, and announced to his devoted compatriots, that here must be erected a temple to the honour of the God of the Christians. And there it was erected; and all that barbarism has left of it gives convincing proof of the fact, for the doorway, the only sad remnant, is of the very earliest age of Celtic architecture, and therefore strengthens, if not confirms the tradition. And what has been the history of this island in consecutive ages? Who, indeed, can tell? for rich as Ireland is in every kind of historical record, bearing upon her surface the undoubted marks of successive races and great internal changes, from the time of the Druids to the cruel conquest of Cromwell, there is perhaps no country where the traditions are less carefully preserved, or the monuments of past history less prized and understood.—Descending from my elevation, I endeavoured, but in vain, to trace out the old foundations, in order that I might obtain some clue to the plan and uses of the structure. Many vestiges of walls were observable, particularly westward of the ruins; but they merely signified the extent, not the appropriation of the buildings. Somewhat removed, and nearer to the shore of the lough, I discovered what appeared to have been stews for fish,—a usual accompaniment in monastic arrangements. Looking, therefore, at these ruins, their posi-

tion, architecture, precincts, and propinquity to St. Patrick's church, I decided that here, in remote times, stood a religious establishment; but of what order, whether for monks or nuns, whether an abbey, a priory, or a cell, I could not even conjecture; nor have I been able to discover any certain traces of these facts in any of the books I have hitherto consulted. That it was a small monastic house, dependent upon the powerful and neighbouring abbey of Cong, seems not improbable. It was but a step through the moist rank grass to the ancient cemetery of St. Patrick. As I stood by that rudely constructed doorway, which had stood the ravages of so many centuries, the stillness around was in accordance with the scene, and the sensations it evoked. An unclouded sun diffused through the atmosphere universal light and warmth, but not the twitter of a bird, not the hum of an insect, broke the solemn calm; not a breath of air stirred the long grassy stalks, or whispered round the quoins of this ancient and holy portal. My imagination retraced the lapse of centuries, and I fell, as before, into many interesting, but irregular and undefined musings. The strange and wayward history of the human family; the incongruity of human actions; the follies, the foibles, the virtues of our race — fallen, indeed, from a better state, but recoverable still; the intensity of human selfishness; the blindness of prejudice; the too easy perversion of simple truths and right principles; the unreasonable aggressions of power; the fatal obstinacy of weakness or error. Perhaps the history of this little island, did I but know it, would prove all this. Many and violent vicissitudes it must have seen: at one time the quiet abode of piety and comparative civilisation; at another, the scene of intole-

rance, persecution, and bloodshed : now, the inaccessible retreat of the lawless plunderer, the daring contrabandist, the convicted felon, or the hunted rebel ; again, the peaceful home of the thrifty agriculturist, or of the shepherd and his patient flock. At present, it is uninhabited. Its church, its cloisters, and its humble dwellings are alike roofless and in ruins ; and, except when the labourer is sent from the neighbouring shore to sow or to reap a small portion of its more fertile soil, this island is deserted, its beauties uncoveted, its existence almost unknown ! Not far from the doorway of St. Patrick's church, and partly buried in mould and grass, is an ancient stone, over whose surface have crept the many-coloured lichens and moss of the finest texture. Still an inscription is there, yet unerased ; and it is doubly valuable, as setting at rest the various conjectures as to the date of these ruins. The inscription runs thus : —

“ *Lie lugnaedon macc,
Lmenuek.* ”

i. e. — *The stone of Lugmaedon, son of Limenuek.* It has been pretty clearly ascertained, from ancient sources, that this Lugmaedon was a disciple, if not a nephew, of St. Patrick, and was probably settled here by that missionary bishop, as he was wont in his travels thus to dispose of his followers, dispersing them every where that they might convert the barbarous tribes immediately around them. The name, too, by which this island is known in these parts is corroborative : — “ *Inis an Ghoell Chraibhthogh,* ” i. e. *The island of the devout foreigner.* It is now denominated “ *Inchagoile,* ” or *Island of the Gaul.* The doorway, of which I have so

often made mention, is of the most ancient form and workmanship known in Ireland. It has a heavy stone lintel, with inclined sides, the bottom of the opening being wider than the top. It is two feet wide below, one foot nine inches above. The stonework is strongly and compactly fitted together, but without cement; which is the case in the earliest stages of architecture. Descending from hence by a gentle slope, I came upon a flat, or a small plain, extending from one side of the island to the other. It was a mere mass of pebbly ground, unfit for cultivation, and had manifestly, at some remote period, been covered by the waters of the lake. Crossing this, I ascended the western point of the island, which rises abruptly on both sides, and commands a splendid panorama of almost boundless extent. This is also either poor, or very exhausted land, and fit only to be planted. From hence, the whole circumference of Inchagoile is visible. The shores are pleasingly irregular, jutting out into promontories, and these again forming pleasant little bays, often frequented by fishermen, either for fishing or for shelter. The eastern end of the island appeared the most fertile; there the grass grew in unshorn luxuriance, and the blackness and richness of the mould gave tokens of long cultivation. I paused on my return to the boat to bid a long, perhaps a last farewell to those interesting vestiges of, I had almost said a better age;—but no, I beg to correct myself, we may not compare darkness with light, civilisation with barbarism. Corragan the boatman joined me, and, pointing to the ancient stone of Lugmaedon, I asked him if he could tell me anything about it. “Och, sure,” said he, without hesitation, “its the giant’s grave. He was so mighty tall that he could

wade half the way over the Lough and swim the rest whenever it plazed him to go a nutting in the wood of Annagh yonder." "And what was his name, Mike?" said I, willing to hear more of his tradition. "Faix, myself don't know at all," replied he, "but I've been tould he was a foreigner, and that his name in the parchments was spelled a yard long, and so it should be, sure, considering how tall he was." From this interesting island to Oughterard, whither I had ordered my letters to be forwarded, the voyage was pleasant, and presented many beautiful objects. We caught a glimpse of Currarevagh House, and skirting the western shore in our progress, had a near view of those many townlands which, reaching from the summit of the hills to the shore of the lake, offer promising investments to those who feel inclined to settle in this improving district. It is a portion of the domain of the Martins of Ballinahinch, and will soon come under the operations of the Encumbered Estates Act. Purchasers would doubtless have been found at first for these very improvable lots; but the prices demanded were under the circumstances next to a prohibition. These lands lie well for draining, and having a communication with the lake will find an accessible market at Galway. There are many loughs among the hills, and there is abundance of water for irrigation or other purposes. The geological features of this district have been already partially described. As we rowed quietly along we passed a small island covered with the most beautiful verdure. A group of cattle were reclining, *à la Cuypp*, on the summit of a picturesque knoll, while a herd of goats were quietly browsing among some rocks. From another islet we roused an eagle, which had doubtless

pounced down there upon his quarry. He rose majestically and slowly, and winged his course towards the distant hills of Connemara. We now entered the mouth of the river Feogh, which emerges from the long line of lakes extending in curious succession from Ballinahinch nearly to Lough Corrib. About half a mile from the lake we reached the town of Oughterard. Stepping on shore with a light and thankful heart, and not a little pleased at the prosperous issue of my excursion, I reached the small but not uncomfortable inn, which, as is not unfrequently the case in these remote parts, is conjoined with the general shop of the district. Here I found my letters, the contents of which at once altered my plans, and compelled my immediate return to England, towards which dear home, if I must speak the truth, notwithstanding all the scenes of interest I had passed through, "my heart still fondly turned."

CHAP. VIII.

RETURN. — REMARKS ON IRELAND. — PREPARATIONS FOR
EMIGRATION.

It was a joyous greeting that I received from my dear family, when I once more found myself beneath the paternal roof. Though the absence in reality was short, to them it had appeared long, and they had begun to fear, from the somewhat enthusiastic tenor of my letters, that my tour would be prolonged. It was not long before my kind friend the Curate joined us, eager to hear a thousand particulars, and anxious to discover the result of my observations as connected with our future plans. "But," said he, archly, "I think there is no secret to communicate,—we may fairly judge from all you have written to us, the warmth of which I confess surprised me, that the Antipodes are at a discount. This delightful and convenient Mullingar railroad has lost Australia or the Canadas a right worthy and desirable emigrant. To reach Galway from London in four-and-twenty hours certainly sets a new face on things, and the Irish may depend upon this, that in spite of their factions, their politics, and their religious squabbles, the English ere long will discover how much better it is to settle in Donegal or Mayo, than to seek their fortunes beneath burning suns, or in the land of the wild Indian. Now my dear friend," continued

the Curate, "answer me this question, fairly and honestly: with such a country as Ireland close at hand, notwithstanding all her faults, do you think any man in his right senses would ever think of seeking a settlement in New Zealand, at the Cape, or Port Philip?" "I think not," replied I; "and I may as well say at once, that my mind is made up to select our new home in the land I have so recently left. I cannot say that I have met with the exact place as yet; but it is my intention to return in the ensuing spring or summer, and to resume my researches till I have made choice of our location. I do not hesitate to confess that Ireland, in the fertility of its soil, the kindness and hospitality of its people, and the beauty of its scenery, has far surpassed my expectations. I am decidedly of opinion, too, that fortune, respectability, and happiness may be found even there." "I never doubted it," said the Curate, "and felt well assured that your absurd English prejudices (pardon me) would speedily wear away, when you saw with your own eyes, and used your own judgment. Let a few English families cluster together, purchase, or take on lease, estates in the same neighbourhood, hold together, mutually assisting each other, 'keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,' as the Apostle advises, acting kindly and *justly* to the inhabitants, eschewing politics, not meddling with the religion of others, but quietly practising their own; I repeat, let emigrant families act thus, and I, for one, would prefer Green Erin as a settlement to any country on the globe. And why not? Are sensible men to be scared with the interested exaggerations of unpatriotic speakers and writers, who would gladly drive industry and civilization from their native shores in order to

serve their own purposes? Are the Irish worse than John Heki, and other native chiefs? or are they more relentless than the Caffres, or the red Indians, or the cannibals of North Australia? In nine cases out of ten, their crimes, deep and fearful as they are, have sprung from the sense of injury, and from the heartless system under which they live,—or rather under which they starve.’ These days of injustice and crime are passing, though slowly, away, and the time is approaching when Ireland must and will be in the strictest union with her sister island—when the same laws, the same usages, the same language, the same feelings will prevail in both, and when ——” “And when,” said I, interrupting him, “the curse of absenteeism will cease, since the power of steam has almost annihilated distance, and now brings the Irish proprietor within a few hours’ journey of the English metropolis.” “True,” continued the Curate, “*the effects of this facility of intercourse will soon be felt*: as yet, the Englishman lingers, hesitates, hugs his old prejudices; but the bolder few are already at work, they are silently and most advantageously purchasing lands and houses; they see the horizon clearing away after the long storm, and they and their descendants will, no doubt, reap a plenteous harvest. Gradually, others will follow, till I verily believe, Ireland will be the fashion, as Scotland has lately been, and everybody rushing that way will wonder why they delayed so long.” I smiled at my friend’s enthusiasm, but felt there was much of probability and truth in his rhapsody. As it was now a settled point that we were to leave the family place, and seek another and a distant home, we naturally turned our minds somewhat towards preparations. The property in ——shire was duly placed in the hands of

a London agent for disposal ; arrangements were made for the sale of the farming stock and implements in the ensuing spring, and all the field operations had now reference to some new possessor. The children, with that buoyancy of feeling so natural to their age, mournful as was to them at times the thought of leaving the place of their birth, yet prepared with ardour and interest for the change. Assisted by our kind friend the Curate, the two elder boys pursued those studies which we thought most useful and practical, such as geology, mineralogy, chemical agriculture, &c. ; and the girls endeavoured to accomplish themselves in all those little domestic arts so necessary to the emigrant's comfort in his home amid the waste. It was when for the last time probably in England, certainly for the last time in our now doubly prized and long accustomed home, we kept the festival of Christmas, that feelings long suppressed burst forth, and the very efforts we all made to wear at least the semblance of cheerfulness, increased rather than dissipated the gloom. Fervently do I pray that such a case as ours may not be general among the agriculturists and yeomanry of England ; but under present legislation, cases such as these will and must be common where encumbrances exist, or where the farmer has not the command of capital. I know not in what manner our feelings, on that usually happy day, would have vented themselves, had not the Curate been our sympathising guest, and gently reprehended what in his heart he could not condemn. " Come, come my friends," said he in his usual cheerful tone, " do not thus waste those spirits which ere long you will be called upon to devote to better objects than regrets that are unavailing. If you were about to embark in a leaky ship, and with

an ignorant and barbarous crew on the wide Atlantic, and to bid adieu, as most of our emigrants do, to their native land for ever, then I would sit by as overwhelmed with sorrow and distress as any of you; but far different is your case. A delightful and easy mode of conveyance to the ocean shore, a mere strait to cross, a splendid city to visit; and then, in a few hours more, still journeying among old historical scenes and familiar faces, you arrive at your destination. You cannot call this banishment, when the same breezes blow over both islands—the same laws are observed, and the same legislature governs, and exchange of communication is the work of only a few hours? I see," continued he, smiling, "sundry eyes directed around this favourite room and its old familiar furniture, as much as to say, 'you see what we are leaving.' But there again you are wrong: the old oak chairs, this inlaid table, the cabinet yonder, so prized and admired, nay, the very piano and carpet; and if it so pleases you, even puss herself, who is purring in her sleep as if she knew the happiness that awaited her, all these shall go too, and many a time will you forget that you are not still in your English home, or at any rate you will each day learn to regret it less." Thus encouraging and soothing us, and aiding our operations in every possible way, our kind friend assisted in whiling the winter away. Our minds became at length more accustomed to our prospects, and I felt a satisfaction inwardly in the conviction, that I should at least leave my native land *an honest man*, and, wherever destiny might take me, I could commence the world again with an independent spirit, and an unblemished name.

CHAP. IX.

SECOND JOURNEY INTO IRELAND. — EDGEWORTHSTOWN. —
 STROKESTOWN. — MR. PACKENHAM MAHON. — CASTLEBAR.
 — THE EARL OF LUCAN.

It was on a fine morning in June, that I found myself at Mullingar once more; but, instead of taking the Galway route, I determined to visit Castlebar, and from thence to penetrate further westward into the county of Mayo. With the exception of Edgeworthstown, Longford, and Strokestown, there was nothing in this route that particularly claimed my attention. As being the residence of one whose name will be honoured as long as Ireland endures, Edgeworthstown was to me full of deep interest; and as I passed by that mansion where the authoress of *Castle Rackrent* lived and died, and found myself amid scenes so graphically portrayed by her matchless pen, I could not help regarding the spot as almost classic ground. The house is a plain family mansion, well sheltered by trees, seated in a small park, and bearing marks, in all its arrangements, of order and neatness. The town, generally, wore the same appearance. It was more English than any I had hitherto seen, Ballinasloe perhaps excepted, and plainly proves that there is nothing in the habits of this people, when taught and duly influenced, to prevent them from living comfortably and creditably. Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Esq., once the accomplished and clever proprietor of

this town and neighbourhood, is well known in the literary world. As an engineer, also, his talents were exerted for the good of his country; and his Report, addressed to the Commissioners on Bogs in Ireland, is a standing monument of his mechanical skill and just observation. Mr. Edgeworth was himself a great improver, and in his Report he satisfactorily proves that the extensive district of the river Inny, near his own estate, once supposed to be irreclaimable, was to be brought into profitable cultivation at a comparatively small outlay. In the central parts of Ireland the bogs possess one great advantage; they mostly lie on a substratum of white marl or blue lime-stone clay. An analysis of the former gives, according to Mr. Edgeworth, 44 per cent. of carbonate of lime, and $1\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. of carbonate of magnesia; of the latter, 87 per cent. of carbonate of lime; the remainder, in both cases, consisting of alumine and silex. Of course, in different places, these quantities may vary. Facts are worth preserving; and as Mr. Edgeworth gives the Commissioners the benefit of *his own experience* in an attempt at improvement made on his own property, it may not be amiss to preserve the same in these pages. The bog or moor in question consisted of twenty-seven acres. He enclosed it with a seven-feet ditch, cut down to the white clay where necessary, to preserve a fall for the water; in other places the drain was not cut to the bottom of the bog, only a few slight surface drains of small dimensions were made in proper places. The bog, which could now bear cattle, was ploughed and burned, yielding a large quantity of red ashes; a coat of lime-stone gravel, of an inch and a half in thickness, was spread on one third of this ground, another third was

covered with quick-lime, the remaining third with marl. The experiment succeeded perfectly ; no material difference appearing in the returns made by the three portions, for the five years Mr. E. occupied it. "I never," says Mr. E., "had 100% capital employed. After five years, every expense being deducted, I had gained a clear seventeen pounds ; and at that period, the land being in meadow, I let it to a farmer at thirty shillings per acre, on a lease for his own life ; and it is now worth double that rent." Evidence of this kind is valuable, coming from so credible a source. I regretted that my time would not allow me to examine the present state of the land thus improved ; but probably there might, after so long an interval, have been some difficulty in identifying the spot. The country around Edgeworthstown is not attractive. Much of it is low and swampy, lying on the banks of that sluggish stream, the Inny ; and the number of poplars do not add to the beauty of the country. Passing through Longford, which, for Ireland, is a good town, though situated on a wide plain somewhat cheerless in its aspect, we passed through a dreary country for several miles, crossing the Shannon at Termonbarry by two bridges, and we then entered the county of Roscommon. Much of the country in this barren district reminded me of what Chat Moss, in Lancashire, was many years ago. The facilities, however, for reclamation appear greater, and much of the land might be profitably irrigated. The Shannon does not here appear to advantage. It exhibits, certainly, a powerful body of water ; but its course is through a flat, marshy, and boggy country, as far as the eye can reach. I was fortunate enough to have, as a travelling companion, an agent of Mr. Pakenham Mahon, the

heir of the unfortunate Major Mahon, who was cruelly murdered near this place. He kindly afforded me much information, and when I arrived at Strokestown, commissioned the superintendent of police, an intelligent person, to show me the house and any part of the domain I might wish to visit. I spent a short time here very profitably. The proprietor is improving his estates on a large scale, and I witnessed the various operations for reclaiming the bogs while being actually carried out, and with wonderful success. Land, which but a short time ago was impassable, was now rendered firm enough for the heaviest cattle; and the crops were, on many portions, most promising. Again, as I looked upon the busy scene around me, I could not help regretting that emigration was so rapidly robbing the country of that class of hardy labourers which, ere long, will be doubtless so much required. The plans now pursuing on this fine and extensive property are judicious. The old boundaries and little wretched holdings are gradually swept away, and the lands are laid out with a view to larger occupation. Main drains are dug out for long distances, which serve also for fences; and in the low grounds and valleys deep trenches are cut, so as to ensure a fall of water, and lay dry many hundred acres of swampy land. This is, altogether, an improving property; and the enterprising farmer might find in this district ample remuneration for his outlay. The park, once the property of Lord Hartland, is prettily varied in its surface, and abundantly timbered. In the village, however, I observed, to my great surprise, a lamentable amount of wretchedness; and the beggars were more numerous and clamorous here than I had found them elsewhere. The policeman informed me

that the most dangerous characters in the neighbourhood had been driven out, and that emigration had been excessive. This is, really, the country of anomalies; looking at the successful issue of the improvements already made, and the extent of those in progress, one might reasonably have expected to find the whole population employed. I could not help remarking their extreme wretchedness, as we travelled along; many of the cabins were totally unfit for human habitation, yet still many tracts of the finest land were to be observed, promising abundance and comfort for all! Are we to attribute this sad condition of things wholly to the state of the law? I think not. Something must be in the people themselves; much in the position of the owners of the land. To me, the whole of this day's observations were perplexing. Sure I am, however, that with an English population these things could not be. It was late when we arrived at Castlebar, and I took up my quarters at an inn near the church, overlooking a handsome green, planted with trees, and surrounded by good houses and public buildings; but, as usual in this untidy country, several ruined and roofless buildings were intermixed with them, such as the wretched old gaol, spoiling the general effect. In this town, the French army, under General Humbert, in 1798, drove back the government forces, making it their head-quarters for several days. There are some good shops here, and much retail business is transacted. The barracks, in which were quartered the gallant 88th regiment, well known in Spain and elsewhere as "the Connaught Rangers," are spacious and clean, substantially built in a square, and offering accommodation to a considerable body of troops. Adjoining are the grounds sur-

rounding "The Lawn," a residence of the Earl of Lucan, who is the great proprietor of the district. His lordship is also an improver on a large scale. The system he is pursuing is much the same as that which I noticed at Strokestown; destroying many of the small holdings, and laying out his lands for larger occupation. There certainly appears, at first, no small amount of hardship inflicted by this mode of proceeding; but it must ultimately work well for the people themselves, and tend materially to rescue them from their present state of degradation. If much is said on the condition of the peasantry, something may be added, too, as to the present position of many of the proprietors. Their estates, or large portions of them, are frequently in the hands of a numerous, moneyless, spiritless tenantry, who care not, if they can only eke out a bare existence from year to year. They agree to rents which they cannot pay if any casualty occurs; and if the landlord enforces his claim, they either shoot him or his agent, or, selling their produce, pocket the rent and take their dishonest gains to America. But in an unfavourable year, not only does the proprietor get no rent, but he has half the population of his estate to maintain; so that cases have occurred where it would be an act of prudence to give up the estate altogether, if such a state of things could not be altered. It is in the endeavour to effect a change, and save themselves from utter ruin, that many of the Irish proprietors are endeavouring to remove their squatter tenantry, and introduce capital upon their estates, by laying them out in larger farms. If Ireland is ever to rank among the civilised countries of the world, it must be through the operation of mighty changes in the present system. Now that internal com-

munications are daily opening out, and the proximity to England is so marvellously increased by railways in every direction, it becomes a self-evident fact that Ireland *cannot* remain as it is ; propinquity to better things will induce imitation ; and that spirit of enterprise which has already converted so many far distant deserts of the earth into smiling and prosperous colonies, cannot and will not suffer one of the loveliest and most fertile islands of the world, only a few hours' distance from our own shores, to remain a mere waste, inhabited, as it is, by a hardy, intelligent, but degraded population. And yet, to see that population quitting their native land by thousands, while all their energies might have ample scope at home, is a lamentable fact, and one that calls loudly for the attention of the legislature. The Earl of Lucan seems to have entered upon the re-adjustment of his property in a very decided way. He is clearing his lands of small holdings, marking out new and large farms, and, at a great cost, bringing them into such a condition as may tempt men of property and science to settle upon them. In this scheme the great expense will of course be, the erection of such farm-houses and buildings as will keep pace with the improved modes of culture and treatment of stock. Lord Lucan has many large tracts of country in hand ; for instance, 2500 acres in Kilmain, near Ballinrobe, now subdivided into three farms, with good buildings and offices, — the soil a good loam, with abundance of limestone and marl. These lands, at present, employ seventy working bullocks, and half as many horses. To the left of the Newport road, also, in the parish of Kilmacrassa, are other lands similarly situated. In the barony of Burris-hoole upwards of 1500 acres are in hand, employing

twenty-five working bullocks and three horses. I was informed that, altogether, Lord Lucan had little less than 10,000 acres in hand; and as leases fall in, the vacant farms undergo the same process, in order to secure for the future a different description of tenant. The mode of treatment seems to be generally as follows:—The surface is pared and burned, the ashes spread, potatoes dibbled in rows without other manure. The ensuing crop of oats is dressed with stable dung, or guano, which can be procured from Liverpool at about 11*l.* per ton. With the oats they lay down with grass seeds, viz. to the acre, 1½ bushel of perennial ray grass, 6 lbs. of red clover, and 9 lbs. of white clover or honeysuckle. Five hundred acres, I was informed, have been thus laid down last year! The Holm Farm is about 3000 acres, and employs thirty working bullocks and twenty-six horses. One sixth part of this is bog, but under gradual reclamation. About thirty acres were reclaimed last year. Ballymacragh is also in hand,—a farm of about 350 acres, situate on Lough Sannagh, two miles on the Westport road. This also is undergoing the process of laying down, and this year thirty-six acres were completed. I merely enter into these imperfect details to show you what is even now being effected, against bad times and ruinously low prices. Lord Lucan has no fewer than seven stewards or overlookers upon these and other farms in hand, and there is a regular office at his residence, near Castlebar, where all the accounts are weekly handed in, examined, and passed. His lordship does not, I believe, let his farms for a longer period than twenty-one years; which, though at present prices probably a prudent plan, yet will, I fear, affect the ready disposal of them. This,

however, is really a desirable country to settle in ; there is much good land, a near market, and abundance of caustic or burnt lime, at from fivepence to sevenpence a barrel, or, what will be more intelligible to English ears, half-a-crown for as much as one horse will draw. Many cattle, also, are bred on Lord Lucan's estates here ; principally short horns, Galloways, and Ayrshires. They are kept till three years old, and then, for the most part, shipped for England. The dairy consists of about one hundred cows. Twelve or thirteen tons of cheese are annually made and sold ; and the butter is packed in firkins, and fetches about eightpence per pound of sixteen ounces. Some of the cheese I tasted at a gentleman's house, and I found it quite equal in quality to the best single Gloster.

CHAP. X.

MR. BURKE'S MARVELLOUS STORIES.—NEWPORT HOUSE.—
 THE CAAB.—SIR RICHARD O'DONNELL, BART.—FLAX.—
 SPECIMEN OF THE O'DONNELL TENANTRY.—A NEW
 FRIEND, MR. S.—NEWPORT UNION-HOUSE.

It is one of the privileges of travelling, that one meets, occasionally, with strange or amusing characters. This country abounds with them, and I endeavour as much as possible to throw aside my natural indisposition to converse with strangers, in order to pick up all the information that comes in my way. But here let me caution all future travellers: great care must be taken as to what degree of reliance you place on the information thus conveyed. It is a peculiarity here, and perhaps not altogether an unamiable one, to conceal what is *con*, while you reveal what is *pro*. In other words, an Irishman will look on the bright side, and he would willingly make you as happy as he can. This propensity has already caused me to examine several small properties, altogether worthless as far as my object was concerned, and to refer to parties whose local knowledge was—*nil*. What is possible, is too often deemed probable; but, forsooth, downright falsehoods are not more rare than in England or any other country, of which I had an instance in Castlebar. Having occasion to visit the shop of a watchmaker, I entered into conversation with him,

and the topic was fishing. Ere long, a kind of a "half sir" looking person came in and joined us. He was old and shaky, beautifully dressed, but in somewhat coarse habiliments; his shoes clean, his once white hat stained and worn, but well brushed, and his gloves clean, though much too large, and not very new. His waistcoat was of a light blue, with brass bell buttons. He talked much of Lough Cullen and Lough Conn; declared he had been fishing there the previous day, and that he had caught a trout of 21 lbs. weight, a pike of 32 lbs., and half a score of other trout from 7 to 12 lbs.! Informing me that his name was Burke, he also laid claim to a near relationship with "the great Edmund;" and I certainly went on my way feeling no little exultation in having met such a man, and such an angler. In fact, I swallowed both fish and family as greedily as a gudgeon takes his worm. A few days afterwards, however, relating this story to a gentleman in Galway, who knew the man, he assured me that the whole was "mere moonshine:" the old angler was not up to landing a trout of a pound weight; and as to Edmund Burke, he was as nearly related to him as to the Great Mogul! The laugh was against me, but I was all the wiser. From Castlebar I went to Newport. The country now opened upon the wilds of Ballycroy; huge mountain masses capped with clouds were seen to the north and west, among which Nephin and Glandahurk stood conspicuous. A few miles from Newport, occurred one of those sights which are peculiarly distressing to an English eye. On the round and verdant ridge of a hill sloping on the western side to a small lake, was a large village, apparently in one long street. The plots of ground we should designate as gardens reached from the houses

to the banks of the lake; the party walls still remained, and it was evident the whole had been recently occupied. As the road brought me nearer to this seemingly pleasant spot, I perceived that every cabin was roofless and dismantled, and not an inhabitant was to be seen. There were in this village, I was informed, at least forty cottages. We soon afterwards passed Lough Beltra, far to the right; and skirting the river of the same name, which supplies an extensive flax-mill near the town, we reached Newport Mayo. Here a circumstance occurred, to be narrated hereafter, that materially altered my previous plans. Having ordered my dinner at the inn, I strolled forth; and as I had heard much of the schools, and the system of education pursued there, I proceeded to inspect them. But I found, on inquiry, that they were no longer in existence; or at least, that they were now so impaired in funds and efficiency as to have dwindled almost to nothing. This, too, is a consequence of the great depression of the landed interest; people who formerly contributed willingly, had now barely means for their own support. Newport, on the whole, is a favourable specimen of an Irish town. Through the centre of it flows the river Beltra, in its progress to Clew Bay. Newport House, the handsome seat of Sir Richard Annesley O'Donnell, Bart., who is the great proprietor of the district, adorns the outskirts. It is well sheltered by fine trees, and possesses that rare accompaniment of a gentleman's mansion in this country, a heronry, and also a rookery. In this house, and in the possession of Sir Richard O'Donnell, is one of the most valuable pieces of antiquity that Ireland can boast. I had the privilege of inspecting it. It is called "The Caah," and is a box $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and eight broad.

The top consists of a plate of silver, richly gilt and chased, and is riveted to one of brass. It is divided into three compartments, or rather arches, supported and separated by clustered columns. In the centre is a sitting figure of St. Columba, with his hair flowing over his shoulders: he holds up his right hand, and in his left is a book. In the right compartment is a figure of a bishop, in his full pontificals and mitre, grasping a crosier in his left hand. In the third compartment is a representation of the Passion, with a glory round the head, and the two Marys, one on each side of the cross. Round the whole box is a chased border, on the top and bottom of which are grotesque figures of wyverns and lions, and on the sides, oak-leaves and acorns. In each of the corners is a setting of rock-crystal; in the centre at the top, a crystal setting surrounded by ten gems — a pearl, three small shells, a sapphire, and amethysts, all in the rough. Affixed to the right side of the box, at the top, is a silver censer suspended to a curious flexible chain, and probably intended to represent a shrine. The centre is richly inlaid with pure gold, and chased. Colonel O'Donel, in 1723, to preserve the box, had a silver case made for it. On this case is a curious inscription, commencing thus: —

“*Jacobo 3^o M. B. Rege exulante, Daniel O'Donel in Xtianiss^o
imp^o præfectus rei bellicæ,*” &c.

The O'Donnell family, of which Columbkil was a member, are descended from Conal Golban, son of Neil of the Nine Hostages, monarch of Ireland. The Caah was always handed down in the O'Donnell family as containing the reliques of the saint. The opening of this box was said to be the certain prelude to the downfall of

the O'Donnell family. After being closed for centuries, it was opened by Sir William Betham, and was found to contain a manuscript on vellum, very much decayed, being a copy of the ancient Vulgate translation of the Psalms, in Latin, of fifty-eight membranes. It is supposed to have been written by St. Columbkil himself, and handed down as an heir-loom in the O'Donnell family. The membranes up to the thirty-first psalm are gone, and those that remain are damaged. A fuller account of this very valuable relic of antiquity is to be found in a work entitled "Irish Antiquarian Researches," published in Dublin, 1826, from which the above details were principally obtained. On the other bank of the river, and about a quarter of a mile east of Newport House, is the rectory, also embosomed in trees; and the church, standing on a bold eminence above the town, has a pleasing effect. The country around Newport has been brought into a comparatively creditable state, and I inspected several farms presenting a much improved state of agriculture. Much has been done by Sir Richard O'Donnell in a right direction: many of the low lands have been laid dry by deep drains and ditches, and every encouragement has been, and will be, afforded to farmers of capital who choose to settle on this estate. This enlightened proprietor has especially directed the attention of his tenantry to the growth of flax, procuring them the best seed, and becoming a ready-money purchaser for their produce at a fair and remunerating price, in order to afford them the utmost possible encouragement. He has also introduced into his neighbourhood the patent machinery invented by Mr. Schenck for steeping and preparing flax, and these highly successful operations are now carried on at the

flax-works of Messrs. Bernard and Co., who are the lessees of certain lands possessing a never-failing and powerful fall of water. The mill affords constant employment to several hundreds of the population. "To the landed proprietors of Ireland," says Mr. Hagan, "this system holds out great advantages. Upwards of half the entire rental of Ireland is annually paid to foreigners for flax, flax-seed, and oil-cake. Now, if Ireland, by the general use of Mr. Schenck's process, be capable of producing more than the quantity of these several products of the flax crop annually required in the United Kingdom, the great benefit of retaining such an immense sum in this impoverished country is plain."

The same advantages to a settler occur at Newport, as before described as belonging to its neighbour and rival Westport. Both possess much highly improvable land, a generally fertile country, good harbours communicating with Clew Bay, abundance of lime and sea manure, and a quiet and industrious population. On all sides around Newport are most beautiful and eligible sites for settlers, and I had means for ascertaining, from an undoubted source, that a better and a more liberal landlord than Sir Richard O'Donnell is not to be found in Ireland. His rents are based on calculations suited to the alteration of the times; and on conversing with several of the tenants, I found them perfectly satisfied with their condition, so far as depended on their landlord. The mountain farms are admirably adapted for rearing young stock, and are let at low agistment rents, generally in conjunction with some portion of arable near the homestead. I heard a young man give an account of the wealth possessed by his father, who lived

up among the hills. He possessed sixty head of cattle, thirty sheep, fourteen lambs, two or three acres of potatoes, as many of oats, and a range of feeding ground equal to carry double the quantity of stock. I got the tenant's name, curious to know the rent, and was informed by the steward that he paid 12*l.* annually ! If there were many such landlords, poverty and disaffection would soon be as rare in Ireland as toads and serpents. I was so attracted by what I heard of this property, and other portions of Mayo, that I felt the strongest inclination to delay my journey into the county of Sligo, and to penetrate into the fastnesses of this interesting and wild district. The opportunity of doing so pleasantly soon occurred. I had taken a long stroll on every side of Newport, and was so much pleased with my walk, that it was long after my dinner hour that I reached the inn ; in fact, the evening had already closed in when I arrived. As it is not my custom, when alone, to ask for a private sitting-room, I found, on entering the general apartment destined for all comers, that I was to have a companion for the evening. A tall, stout, hale-looking gentleman had drawn his seat and table towards a bright turf fire, the cloth was spread, and there was every appearance of his making himself comfortable. He took little notice of my entrance, and continued devouring the contents of an old newspaper without making any way for me at the fire. " Scotch or English," thought I to myself, " for a certainty." It is my habit, in these cases, to make myself comfortable also ; and I accordingly rang the bell, and ordered the waiter to bring me another table, to place it also near the fire, for the evening was chill ; and I paced the room while these preparations were going on. I set down my companion as a disagreeable churl,

and resolved to treat him with the same indifference that he exhibited towards me. First impressions are often erroneous, and so it proved in this case. An English coffee-room, and, above all, an English travellers' room, are generally beyond measure dull and formal; selfishness seems to pervade the whole place, while each man eyes his neighbour as if he came in questionable shape. At the same time it must be allowed, we occasionally meet with exceptions to this rule. I have frequently experienced much civility, and gained much information, from strangers in these places. In the present instance I was destined to be undeceived: the disagreeable churl, having finished some interesting article he was perusing, addressed me courteously, turned out a most delightful companion, and the dull evening I anticipated did not close till the hour of midnight. "Sir," said the hale gentleman to me, taking off his spectacles and smoothing down the locks of mingled grey that hung in massive curls almost upon his shoulders, "as I perceive you are about to dine, and I am about to sup, would you object to our occupying the same table, and sharing the same fare? I have brought with me a fine brace of white trout from Ballycroy, and the landlady has promised to furnish something or other equally agreeable in addition." I gladly accepted the invitation, and nothing would suit my new acquaintance, but that I must take the chimney corner, while he undertook to do the honours of the table. "And so, sir," said I, after the remnants of an excellent feast had been cleared away, and we were left in the quiet enjoyment of our whisky punch, "you know that wild region called Ballycroy? It is not mentioned by that name in my map, but still, from its being so often in the mouths of the natives

here, I suppose it is a considerable tract of country." "It is, certainly, a large tract," replied my companion; "but as the barony is called Erris, you will only trace the district under that denomination in the map. That vast mountainous country, which you have perceived stretches from hence to the north-west, consists of the baronies of Burrishoole, Erris, and Tyrawley. Consult your map, and you will find that this wild and seldom-travelled district is bounded north and west by the Atlantic Ocean; on the south by Clew Bay and that chain of primary mountains which extends from Newport, where we now are, to Lough Cullen; on the east it is bounded by the river Moy, one of the finest in Ireland, and the large and beautiful lakes of Conn and Cullen." "You seem to be well acquainted," said I, "with the district; for my part, I never saw it mentioned in any of the descriptive works that came in my way. In casting my eye over it in the maps, I have always conceived it was the *ultima Thule* of Ireland; a place where the stag, the wolf, and the wild boar, were likely to be the sole occupants." My companion laughed heartily. "No bad description, certainly," said he; "most of the wild animals do abound there — the stag, the otter, the fox, and the badger; but wolves and wild boars I have certainly not met with, during a residence of fifteen years. As far as the stag is concerned, I must not apply the word *abound*. I do see them, occasionally; but a set of ruffians are always on the look-out for them, and if some stringent measures are not adopted, they will be exterminated. It is a pity, for they are the last living monuments of Ireland in its best days." "I cannot imagine anything so unpatriotic," said I, "as the

destroying these fine animals. I have seen them, myself, in Somersetshire, where they still exist in the forest vales of Exmoor ; but, even there, the rapid breaking up of the heathy hills, for the sake of a profitless attempt at reclamation, will ere long drive them, too, from their ancient haunts. The late highminded and truly noble Earl of Carnarvon would not allow them to be destroyed, on his lovely and wild domain near Dulverton ; but preferred making large allowances to his tenantry for their occasional outbreaks, rather than suffer them to be driven away or molested. To see all the *feræ naturæ* annihilated, one after another, by the progress of population, is to me melancholy ; nor have I such a love for my own species as to wish every other banished, to make way for busy, restless man. Every trace of the manners and customs of our ancestors will ere long be lost, and Nature must take wing before the attacks of an utilitarian generation." "It will be long," said Mr. S., smiling, "ere the utilitarianism you mention seriously invades the recesses of Erris or Tyrawley. These districts at the present moment, a few favoured spots excepted, are more desolate and neglected than they were probably centuries ago. But now that good roads have been opened through them, their capabilities will at least become more known ; and if they are deserving of the attention of capitalists, they will doubtless at some period or other receive it. For my part, I think those hitherto almost inaccessible regions have many valuable points about them. I ought to know, for I have resided in one of the most remote parts of that district from the period of my leaving England." A shade passed over my companion's face, but it was

but for a moment. "I have never, however," continued he, "repented my choice of a home, and never intend to leave it. But new settlers will not have the up-hill game to play that I had. At the time that I retired amid the recesses of Erris there were no safe roads for carriages, and even such as were dignified with that name, were mere horse-paths leading up the sides of mountains, and passing through quaking bogs and dangerous morasses. Now, the communication is everywhere opened, markets are attainable, and the way is cleared for any further improvements that enterprise and capital may choose to effect. And yet, at this present moment, I could purchase the same tract of land which I now hold, were it in its primitive condition, for at least fifty per cent. less money." "That is all in my favour," said I. "Like yourself, I am an English refugee, and am now actually engaged in looking out for a new settlement, preferring Ireland to the colonies." "And you are right," replied Mr. S., "there is not, in my opinion, a comparison to be drawn. Setting all mere feelings aside, I believe, in the present position of this country, that a man can settle himself here on a more certain and favourable basis than anywhere else that I have heard or read of. The English, generally, from a most ridiculous and vulgar prejudice, never once turn their attention this way; their sole idea of Ireland is associated with murder, faction fights, and agrarian outrages of all sorts. The extreme fertility of the soil, the mildness of the climate, the present cheapness of the land to a purchaser, the real good qualities of the population, particularly in these parts, the vast maritime advantages within reach, the now rapid communication

with England, and the consequent ulterior prospects of the country — all these are lost sight of by the present generation, to be improved and valued, probably, by the next." "And yet," said I, "you find exceptions; and I believe that many far-sighted men are quietly investing their money here, with the absolute certainty, where purchases are made with judgment, of securing a most ample return." — "Yes, more than a mere ample return. I have, myself, known estates disposed of in some of the remoter districts, the annual rental of which, should times improve, as they must and will do, ought to equal the sum total of the purchase money. But care should be taken in seeking out a purchase, and more in making one: many considerations are involved, and a person may fancy that he has made a great bargain by giving fifteen years' purchase, for what probably is not worth five. It is most difficult at present, in Ireland, to judge of real value by assumed rentals: a prudent investor will put aside rental altogether, and have the land valued irrespectively of its alleged returns. As you are now engaged in the search for a settlement, I think my experience might be useful to you. I leave this place in a few days for my farm in Erris, and if you will share my conveyance, and give me the pleasure of your company for a few days, I dare venture to say you will not repent it. You may then see what can be done, and one day with me will probably enlighten you more than all the tours and agricultural works on your shelves. I am, certainly, somewhat of a stranger to you," continued he, smiling, "but my worthy friend the landlady here, or the clergyman of this place, and he is a truly excellent man, will relieve you of all fear of being either

murdered or robbed in my company." We continued our conversation to a late hour; and to my great pleasure and surprise I found in my new friend a near connection of my mother's family; a bond of union as acceptable under present circumstances as it was unexpected. It was mutually agreed that as soon as Mr. S. had completed his business, we should set out together on our expedition into Erris. I felt as if there was something providential in this meeting; and I had now the opportunity I had so much desired, of leisurely viewing things with my own eyes, and forming my judgment on a near and calm inspection.

I must not forget to mention my visit to the Newport union-house, before I bid adieu to the environs of this well situated little town. Crossing the bridge, in company with one of the guardians, we proceeded to an ancient mansion-house, called, I think, "Sea Mount," which, with its extensive outbuildings, the property of Sir Richard O'Donnell, have been fitted up for the temporary accommodation of the paupers. The situation is romantic and secluded, and the premises are sheltered by trees of considerable growth. I minutely examined and inquired into all the arrangements, and was much pleased to observe the general air of neatness and cleanliness which pervaded every department. The inmates of full age were in number 368, of whom 217 were women. Besides these, was the full average of boys and girls. I could not find that any of these had settled employment, though I was informed by the matron that the young women were most ready to do any work assigned to them, and never so contented as when thus engaged. The men were expected to keep the premises in neat

order; but I found they had no wheelbarrows, and only a few shovels among them. Every fine day the paupers, male and female, were taken down to the sea-shore to bathe. They were allowed a change of linen once a week, and of sheets once a fortnight. The dormitories were clean and well ventilated: each bed had two occupants. The dietary was as follows: for breakfast, each adult had eight ounces of Indian meal made into stir-about, with one pint of buttermilk; for dinner, one pound of brown bread, and one pint of buttermilk. I tasted the bread: it was coarse and heavy, being composed of equal proportions of rye-meal, Indian corn, and old flour. For supper, the children are allowed a quarter of a pound of white bread, and, added my conductor, "a rasonable quantity of new milk." The beds in the dormitories were not too crowded, and were all neatly rolled up during the day, and the floors swept and well scoured. The mattresses are stuffed with oat straw. Each bed had one sheet, one double blanket, and a rug. The children are taught to read and write, but no instruction of any kind is, I believe, offered to adults. I requested that a few of the boys who had just entered the house, and a few of those who had been inmates more than six months, might be placed in juxtaposition, so that I might judge of their relative appearance. The distinction was remarkably in favour of the latter. This may, however, be accounted for by the fact, that nothing but the extremity of destitution and want will induce these poor creatures to enter the union-house. Though there was nothing peculiarly to complain of in the arrangements, except indeed that one could have wished for a more varied and generous diet,

yet it was, on the whole, a painful visit to me. Symptoms of dissatisfaction at their position were but too visible among some, and there was a desponding tone in several that I addressed, which went to my heart. With the world before them, with one half of their own country a mere uncultivated waste, it struck me as a strange anomaly to see so many fine specimens of the human stock living in unwilling idleness, and at the expence, too, of a suffering and impoverished community.

CHAP. XI.

CARIG-A-HOWLA. — BURRISHOOLE ABBEY. — LOUGH FEOGH.

HAVING made this arrangement with my new friend, I determined to spend the intervening time in further inspecting the beautiful environs of Newport, and then making, as he had also suggested, a short tour of Achill. There are many fine farms around Newport which would well repay the skill of the agriculturist. I again visited several, and noticed much judicious draining and reclaiming in progress by the worthy proprietor of this highly fertile district. One evening I strolled along the romantic shores of Clew Bay till I reached the old tower of Carig-a-howla. It is a square fortalice, very strong, with a gabled gateway, and a low round tower or barbican adjoining. Like most of these ancient strongholds, it is close to the water's edge, in early times a position both of security and convenience. Proceeding onwards, I ascended an eminence that commanded a great extent of the surrounding country, and was crowned by a Danish fort. The prospect was exceedingly beautiful, comprehending in one panoramic view, Clew Bay, with its islands, Cruagh Patrick, and the mountains of Murrisk, Clare Island, and the distant hills of Curraun, together with Newport, Westport, and the range of hills far to the east. One of the Queen's armed schooners was in full sail up the bay, probably to inspect the

lighthouse, &c. If so, her duties were soon performed. After ascertaining that the lighthouse was there, if, indeed, that was her business, she tacked out of the bay again, and was soon out of sight. Returning, I passed by a gentleman's house in a most lovely situation, which, however, was sadly deteriorated by the utter absence of neatness and order. Potatoes were cultivated up to the very walls of the house, and where a lawn should have been, were ugly heaps of gravelly soil thrown up without any apparent use or motive. A few tall, drooping poplars and sickly firs were stuck here and there, just where they ought not to have been. I have certainly seen the same bad taste occasionally in England, but it is the exception there, not, as here, the rule. The Irish, as a people, have but little notion of landscape-gardening, or of bringing out the beauties of nature. They do not, in general, select the best situations for their houses, and there is too often an air of discomfort and want of arrangement around their dwellings, which at first is repulsive to the fastidiousness of one who has been accustomed to English scenery. But to this remark, however, there are some praiseworthy exceptions. The day following I devoted in the inspection of Burrishoole Abbey and its magnificent Lakes. These loughs are formed in the hollows of the mountains by the many streams issuing from the deep glens of the hills of Erris to the northward. The scenery is in the highest degree picturesque. After visiting the extensive ruins of the Abbey, which are situated on the left bank of the broad river which connects the loughs with Clew Bay, I again crossed the road; and, passing the now deserted school-house of Dderadda, I took the old Roman road through

the wild and romantic townland of Doontrusk, and embarking in a four-oared boat, near a little stream which forms the northern boundary, I landed at the junction of the two lakes, after rowing to Nixon's Island, and to portions of the surrounding shore. Here the waters of Lough Feogh throw themselves over a mass of immense rocks forming a magnificent cascade, but not so precipitous as to impede the progress of the salmon upwards when they seek the fresh water. The high tides flow into the lower lake, called the Furnace Lough from an old Roman blomary on its shores, and at the outlet of this are the salmon weirs. Mr. Nixon, the lessee of the fishery, and a shrewd active fellow with a crippled hand, here joined us, and, proceeding along the rugged shores of this upper lough, which showed manifest signs of having been at one period thickly wooded, we entered a second boat, and rowed gently to the very head of the lake. The scene that now presented itself was singularly beautiful, and rendered more so by the changes that were every minute passing over it from the rapid alternations of cloud and sunshine. At one moment it lay before us in sombre magnificence, or partially veiled by the driving mists, through which every object loomed out large and indistinct; at the next, the sun bursting out would light up and bring into bold relief some protruding mass of grey and barren rock which seemed suspended over us, peering for a moment from its thick mantle of closing vapour. Far away in the dim distance, darkling mountains occasionally disclosed their various and fantastic forms, only to be obscured again by heavy fogs or the scudding rack. Here to the north-east of the head of the lake was to be seen the towering

cliffs of Mount Eagle* ; on the right, the cone-formed hill of Buckhaugh ; while Turc Slieve, far to the north, overlooked the fertile vale of Shrahmore. In this valley, a great portion of which is the property of Sir R. O'Donnell, good wheat is grown, and nothing but a few safe roads are wanting to convert this district into a land of plenty and cultivation. To the angler, also, these lakes often afford fair sport, but owing to the heaviness of the atmosphere, and the want of a fresh in the waters, I had myself no success. Leaving Lough Feogh, we clambered for nearly a mile over a craggy shore, to visit the other outlet of the lake. This is artificial, and was probably in some way connected with an old building, of which part still remains, and which tradition says was erected by the Romans, and formed a portion of their iron-works at this place. Here, too, the salmon find their way into the upper lake. Formerly this district was a thick forest, and here for the sake of the fuel, the Romans probably brought their iron ore up the river from Clew Bay and smelted it on the spot. Hence the lower lake is designated the Furnace Lough.

* The Marquis of Sligo takes one of his titles from this mountain, an old possession of the family.

CHAP. XII.

EXCURSION AMONG THE BALLYCROY MOUNTAINS. — IRISH
HOSPITALITY.

I AM now resting at the inn at Newport, after one of the most fatiguing rambles I ever attempted. As I was sailing on the broad bosom of the Furnace Lough I was so struck with the bold heights of the Nephin or Ballycroy mountains, rearing their craggy fronts to the westward, that I determined to ascend them, convinced that the views would amply repay the exertion. A guide was provided for me, and we commenced our walk from the House of Curreen, a solitary dwelling at the foot of the mountains, but inhabited by persons of consideration, if I may judge by the neat equipage, &c. which I met as I approached the dwelling. We soon struck off the mountain road, and faced the precipitous ridge which divides the two wild glens of Thaumaus and Glendahurk. I will not weary you with the details of my ascent, as these feats have been so often described by more practised pens than mine; and were I to attempt any delineation of the fine views that opened upon me as I rose higher and higher from the level plain to the very eyrie of the eagle, I could convey to you no idea of the reality. My guide was an active long-legged mountaineer, and an inhabitant of these wilds. I fancied he wished to tire out

the Sassenach, and accordingly with becoming spirit I resolved to die game. We rested twice, and only then for a few seconds before we attained the summit of Cuscombecurragh, and it was at his own suggestion that we stopped at all. The second time we seated ourselves ~~was~~ on a narrow ridge of rock which descends almost perpendicularly into Glen-Thaumaús on one side, and into Glendahurk on the other. A curious fact here occurred perhaps worth mentioning, as showing the superstitious feeling prevalent in these regions. I took out my cigar-case, and having only small wax lucifers, as soon as I lighted one it was extinguished by the driving sleet. I tried another, and a third, and was about to try a fourth, when my guide, one of the respectable sept hight Macguire, laid his hand on my arm, and said somewhat sternly, "No — I ask yer honour's pardon — but no more; if you do, I must leave you." — It was a really sublime position we had attained. Thin vapours hurried over the summits of the mountains, sometimes veiling all below in obscurity; then again they rolled off, and the deep glens below, with their glittering streams, their verdant spots and craggy sides, browsed by the sheep, opened upon us with all the loveliness of a finished picture. I thought of Beattie's beautiful lines:

"All in mist the world below ~~was~~ lost;
What dreadful pleasure! there to stand sublime,
Like shipwrecked mariner on desert coast,
And view the enormous waste of vapour, tost
In billows, lengthening to the horizon round,
Now scooped in gulfs, with mountains now embossed!"

As we attained the peaked summit of Corranabinna, nearly 2500 feet from the level of Clew Bay, we found

ourselves quite enveloped in thick clouds. A chill rushing wind met us, and we hurried on searching for the shelter of some overhanging rock. The vapours occasionally dissolved in rain, and my companion now disappointed all my previous expectations by assuring me that I had no chance, for that day at least, of enjoying the splendid view to the north and west of these heights. After we had wandered about on the top of the mountain for nearly half an hour, he at length told me it would be a work of no little danger to attempt a descent before the mist had in some measure cleared off, for the dangerous precipices overhanging the Corranabinna Lake could not be far from us. We had no alternative then but to shelter ourselves as best we could, under the angle of a rock, a very indifferent protection against the driving sleet; but I had this especial comfort, it was yet early in the day, and I had already had enough experience of such situations to know, that the changes from storm to sunshine were no less rapid and to be looked for, than those from fair weather to mists and darkness. The event fully justified my spirit of resignation: a brisk rain descends, and the clouds seem lighter; now they sweep past us up the hill—they darken again, and are more thick than ever; now a break is distinguishable for a moment—something like a ray of the sun seems to linger for an instant on a distant rock below us; now the sun breaks through: and never can I forget my sensations as the scene opened upon us. We now found—for hitherto we could hardly see a foot before us—that we had been sitting all this time upon the very brink of that fearful precipice which overhangs the wild and solitary Lough of Corranabinna (or more properly, Carreg-a-Binniogh). Had we attempted dur-

ing the mist to move our position, we must have been dashed to atoms. "By dad, master alanna," said my guide, looking in my face with a half-fearful expression, "it was well you did not try the fourth match!" It seemed here as if a gorge ran from the far-off plain into the interior of the mountains, dividing the heights of Meilroc and Corranabinna. At the extremity of this was a dark lake, hemmed in on three sides, partly by inaccessible cliffs, partly by green and heathery slopes. On the highest of these precipices we now stood a thousand feet above the lake; and so suddenly was the sense of our position forced upon us, that it was not till we had thrown ourselves on the ground, and crawled along some distance from the fearful verge, that we dared to stand upright and gaze upon the glorious scene below. Plains, hills, lakes, rivers like threads of silver, distant ranges of mountains, bays, promontories, and far-off ocean rocks or islands, these all were beneath us, or stretching far away to the horizon. I could have stood and gazed for hours. The words of Goldsmith were at my heart though not upon my lips:

"Creation's heir — the world — the world is mine."

It was Nature's own map, and I soon, from my geographical knowledge of the district, made my eye familiar with my position. "We are now," said my companion, "in Shrahduggane; and that lake to the left, as well as the dark one below us, are the sources of the Owenduff river, which empties itself yonder into Turlogh Bay." "Yes," said I, "close by Croy Lodge, where is the celebrated salmon fishery. That black and gloomy range to the left, in the far distance is, I suppose, Currawn Achill; and beyond are Slievemore and Croaghan,

with Saddle Head to the north." "Right, Sir," interrupted Macguire; "and look off to sea as far as your eye can reach — that rock is called Deevelaun, famous for 'agles and say birds;' and yonder is the country round Belmullet; and there Tyrawly lies, till it reaches Killala Bay and Crossmolina." "And," continued I, "yonder far bay, on which the sun is just now shining, is Blacksod Harbour, and beyond is the Mullet, and this lovely creek, that penetrates so beautifully inland, is Tulloghan Bay, and that inland lough is Fahy, on which the Castle of Doona is situated. What a glorious map is this!" "You seem to know all about it," said Macguire, looking surprised. "I once came upon this mountain with a 'foreigner,' who asked me if we could see Snowdon in Wales. 'And is it Wales you're talking about?' says I. 'Faith, and he must have a keen eye that can see Snowdon, I'm thinking, even if he were on the top of Nephin,' says I." "Well, but Macguire," I resumed, "tell me the name of that round hill that stands, as it were, by itself on the plain below, like a sentinel to the receding circular range around it." "That is Gloreslieve, about 1000 feet high; and the mountain to the right is Scardaun, which forms the western side of Nephin Beg. And do you see a black speck just where the river seems to turn round a green knoll? that is the shooting lodge of Mr. Vernon; and beyond, not far, is the house of Mr. Lees, which he has built as a fishing station. The rivers of Ballycroy are famous among anglers all over Ireland, and some of those loughs you see there sparkling in the waste, have trout in them of seven and fourteen pounds' weight!" *

* The author never met with them.

"Did you ever try the Ballycroy river, Macguire, which empties itself near Croy Lodge into Tulloghan Bay?" "O yes, often. Last week I hooked a salmon which weighed twenty-two pounds, and we had a pretty severe 'tussle' of nearly two hours before he was landed. He was as fat as a pig, pretty nearly the same thickness from his shoulder to his tail." "What river is that which joins the estuary there to the left with several branches ramifying over the flat plain till they meet in one stream above yonder bridge?" "It is the old bridge of Bellaveeny; and that is the Bellaveeny river, or more properly the Owen-a-vrea. It rises in the lake on yonder mountain-side, but the country through which it runs is anything but flat, though it seems to us so. It would be a first-rate stream for fish if preserved, and providing there was more water. It has large trout, and might have a few salmon too, but for the night fishing. That might easily be prevented, for the poachers cannot conceal their light: it may be seen from a long distance. The way they do it is this: When the salmon come up to spawn, the poachers go by night, and, with a torch, perceive where the fish wallow to leave their spawn, and they take them out by means of a gaff." "It is an abominable practice," said I, "useless to the thief, and very injurious to the country; for fish so taken are not wholesome food."

With such conversation, Macguire and I whiled away an hour on the mountain as we sat and overlooked the splendid scene below. At length it was time to commence our descent, for a cloud already rested on the summit of Nephin Beg, and the day still seemed uncertain. "*Facilis descensus Averni*:" not so into the plains of Ballycroy. Many a fall had we—many a

time did we pause to select the safest slope, where, indeed, all were precipitous; and in several places Macguire stopped to make me listen where the underground torrents were rushing beneath the very earth on which we stood. This made careful walking necessary, for it would not have been very pleasant to sink below the surface into the depths of one of these subterranean pools. We at length attained the level of the two lakes which we had observed so far beneath us when on the summit of the mountain. Two such valleys as those in which they lie are not often seen. The first we traversed was covered by immense blocks of rock scattered everywhere in strange confusion, and in every picturesque form. In one place, one had so rolled upon another as to form a natural cave, affording excellent shelter, others were half sunk in the ground, while some seemed almost to tremble in the air, merely resting on an angular point or leaning against some other neighbouring mass. Frequently crystal springs emerged from beneath these giant boulders, and marked their sinuous course into the plain beneath by a waving line of the freshest verdure. As we climbed a gentle knoll which separates these two wild glens, I looked back upon the scene we were leaving with a feeling of awe. The clouds already obscuring the summits of the precipice, the jutting cliffs above, the huge rocks below, and the calm surface of the lake, formed a whole truly and strikingly sublime. It was close to this spot that the author of "The Wild Sports of the West" met with the red deer, and here it was that the noble stag was killed. The other lake we have already described. Its waters were still and very dark, and the precipice rose around it on three sides, almost a thousand feet.

This portion of the mountain range of Ballycroy was ever the favourite haunt of the wild deer, and here, I was informed, they still linger, though very few in number. To have caught sight even of one would have completed the interest of the scene. Leaving these romantic glens, we at length gained the fine slopes which everywhere distinguish the bases of these mountains; and I often paused to observe the rare capabilities of improvement which on every side presented themselves. A few judicious catch-water drains, if opened at the commencement of these slopes, would at once act beneficially upon many thousand acres on the plains below. It is from the innumerable springs that issue from the heights, that the plain is so saturated with moisture — once cut these off, and with the assistance of a few mains to convey them to the beds of the rivers, the ordinary quantity of surface drains, of about two feet deep or less, would totally alter the whole aspect of the country. I never saw any tract of land where extensive and highly remunerative operations could be so easily and economically carried out. Draining, irrigation, and subsoiling, are all easy of performance, and in many parts the vegetable matter does not exceed two or three feet in depth. The plain which appeared so flat as viewed from the mountain, we found, on traversing it, sufficiently uneven, having many eminences in the midst of the moor, which appeared to contain abundance of clay and sand. Some of the sand I tested with muriatic acid, and it effervesced briskly, of course exhibiting the presence of lime. Our walk to Macguire's cabin was nearly five Irish miles across the waste, though he protested it was "just a step or so, and quite convenient." But the genius of speculation was so

alive within me, and I was so engaged as we strode along, that I did not grudge the distance. Every inch of land we traversed seemed reclaimable, possessing a fine sunny aspect, excellent slopes for draining, and rivers running far into the land, capable of bringing up lime and sea-manure from the neighbouring islands and deeply indented shores. "It is a shame," exclaimed I to my companion, as we paused for a moment on a round knoll in the centre of the vast plain, "it is a shame and a disgrace to every Celt and Milesian in the land, that such a fine tract as this should lie a mere useless waste, while in other parts every shallow deposit among the rocks, and even the very sands on the sea shore, are eagerly sought after and dearly rented, in hopes of obtaining a scanty produce. I cannot understand it." "And faith I don't wonder," replied Macguire, archly: "your honour does not know, perhaps, that all things are done in Ould Ireland by the rule of contrary. There is land here that will fat out sheep and bullocks, and I'm the man that know it, sure, for I've seen it myself." I smiled at this remark, and set it down as one of the many instances I had met with of poetic exaggeration among this imaginative and lively people; but I afterwards was informed by a respectable proprietor of the district, that my companion was correct in his statement. In fact, as we walked along the banks of the Ballyveeny river, I remarked many extensive patches of deep alluvial soil, which only required enclosing with fences and ditches to render them, with a little dressing of lime, first rate meadow land. I noticed also, that as we approached the coast, every portion which had been worked by the cottar's spade exhibited crops of the heaviest and most promising description; and I

felt satisfied that, so long as such land remained in Ireland neglected and almost unappropriated, it was sheer wickedness to ship off luckless emigrants to the barren plains of Australia, or the ferny wastes of New Zealand. After such a morning's walking, climbing, and bog-trotting as I had gone through, the rude, yet hearty hospitality of my friend Macguire's cabin was not to be despised. Her unvarying kindness to the stranger, her open-hearted profuse hospitality, her noble and generous contempt of "remuneration," will ever endear Ireland to my memory. "Sure, and it wasn't the money ye offered the woman!" said my guide, vehemently, to me, as he entered the cabin, and caught his wife's indignant look, as she flung my offering to the winds, "would you eat the bread and then take away the blessing?" I was ashamed of myself and looked with reverence upon these poor people, and could only mutter my apology that I was an Englishman, and that in England no man ever refused what was offered him, &c. &c. The Irish have many faults, I grant you; but for courtesy, good humour, willingness to oblige, and kindness of heart to a suffering fellow-creature, they have no equals. I have seen it, and experienced it too, in a hundred instances. After a pleasant walk with Macguire along the banks of the Owen-a-vrea, I found a car waiting for me at the bridge of Ballyveen, and was soon comfortably seated in mine own inn in the pleasant town of Newport, Mayo.

CHAP. XIII.

FLAX MILLS.—CURRAWN.—FEVER HUT.—PWLLRANHY.—
INN AT THE SOUND.—KILKURNET CASTLE.—SLIEVEMORE.
—COLONY.

THE next morning not being very favourable for a long excursion, I visited the flax mills, which are situated about half a mile out of Newport, on the Castlebar road. The beautiful Beltra river, flowing from the lake of that name, gives a constant water power; though, to the eye of the angler, and the lover of the picturesque, it would appear treason against nature to have it so employed. The modern utilitarian, however, would think very differently; and, in his view, the money thus distributed among the population of the town is an ample set-off against the total subjugation of the sublime and beautiful. A relative of Mr. Cobden, to whom I had the pleasure of being introduced, is a partner in this thriving establishment. I inspected the works thoroughly, and with great interest. I have alluded to the process before, which is, besides, too well understood for me to enlarge upon. Here I saw about three hundred persons employed; but I could not help fancying that the gathering together of such large masses, unless under the strictest surveillance, must be subversive of moral habits. The cultivation of flax, for which the soil and climate of Ireland are so well adapted, is, I believe, rapidly extend-

ing. Till, however, some fixed and steady price is agreed upon by the consumers and producers, the home growth will not be large; for there is so much uncertainty as to prices, that it gives the cultivation the air of a mere speculation. A little below the flax mills, and on the opposite side of the river, is Newport Rectory, the beautiful residence of the very worthy clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Gildea. The church is on the opposite hill, in a commanding situation, close to the grounds of Newport House. The Roman Catholic chapel occupies the brow of another eminence, apparently further removed from the town.

I write this from the little incommodious inn at the settlement or colony in Achill. Leaving Newport early, I traversed the shores of Clew Bay, and took the Achill road, just as we turned the shoulder of the Glen Taumaus mountains, leaving the romantic pass of Dukell to the right. We here enter upon the wild district of Currawn Achill. Lofty heath-clad mountains attend us on the left, exhibiting many a hollow gorge, and many a lonely streamlet issuing from the far off lakes above. On the right, a beautiful inlet from Blacksod Bay stretched its arms through a low but undulating tract of waste or bog land, easily reclaimable, and known as the Pwllranhies. Numberless roofless huts, with their gables standing up, told the usual tale of emigration, famine, and disease; and I could not but wish that some I saw still tenanted were also levelled with the ground. In one spot, low in a bog hole, I observed a wretched pile of turf built up in the form of a cone, with an en-

trance scarcely large enough for a dog to creep through. Every blast of heaven, every shower of hail or rain, must have penetrated this den of dirt and smoke. I inquired of the car driver what was the meaning of this strange piece of architecture. "Sure, and is it the little cabin there you are meaning?" replied he, with a lash at his horse. "Well then, it's the poor man, sure, that's got the faver, that lives there, if he isn't dead, for the family were afraid of the infection." For a human creature to inhabit such a den was shocking indeed, but that it should be the refuge of a poor wretch in a fever, was something worse. I have no language to express my feelings: is it possible to conceive a lower step in the scale of being? The badger and the fox fare better than this member of the human family, one of the boasted lords of the creation.

As we drove along, my eye continually rested on large improvable tracts; and I could not help endeavouring to realise to myself the vision of flourishing farms, and well stocked mountain pastures. This district presents many of the capabilities I have already described in Ballycroy—fine slopes for draining, access to markets by sea, abundance of sea-manure, and excellent roads. The industry of man, and the application of capital, are alone wanting, to convert Ballycroy and the low lands of Currawn into one of the finest arable and pasture districts in the British dominions. Arrived at the little inn at the sound of Achill, I waited an hour till the tide flowed sufficiently to allow the passage of a boat to Cloughmore, which is at the south-eastern extremity of the island, and where I had been informed was much good land, and a commodious pier erected. In the interval I walked up to the new church, now building

on the waste, and could not but give due credit to the zeal which had conceived and actually brought the plan into execution. The congregation to be benefited is at present in vision, not in reality; for scarcely a dozen dwellings are to be found, and probably most of those inhabited by Roman Catholics. Great exertions, however, are making in these parts to withdraw the people from the ancient faith; and the melancholy state of destitution into which almost the entire population of this island has been plunged, since the potato failure, has much aided the design. Schools have been established in various parts, and to those who regularly attend, and thus consent to receive a Protestant education, from three and a half to seven pounds of meal, or thereabouts, are weekly distributed as an inducement and reward. I was informed by the rector of the parish of Achill, that not less than 1800 are thus relieved and educated. He also stated that he expected a congregation of 250 persons at his new church at the Sound. That a considerable town will ere long rise on this spot I have little doubt; and it would be a great benefit to all the surrounding country could sufficient advantages be offered, so as to induce a number of Englishmen to settle themselves in this eligible locality. I had a pleasant ramble over the finely undulating ground to the south of the inn. For subdivision into small farms, I have seldom visited a more eligible spot; and should a spirited proprietor of sufficient capital ever possess this fine tract, he may either cultivate or subdivide it to great advantage.

From whatever part of the country you catch a glimpse of the heights of Currawn, which tower over this pleasant lowland district, they appear dark, wild, and gloomy beyond any other of the neighbouring ranges. I clam-

bered up the mountain as far as a solitary lake called Loughaun, and above this to a romantic dip, containing in its bosom the waters of no less than five other lakes. Over these the cliffs rise till they attain the height of nearly 2000 feet above the level of the sea. In these deep ravines and corries was the favourite haunt of the wild deer, and I know no better spot for the formation of a deer forest.

The excursion through the sound to Cloughmore was interesting. On the right were the dreary hills of Lower Achill, and as we approached the old tower of Kilkurnet there were many rich slopes on the shore, apparently thickly inhabited, and partially cultivated in hundreds of small wretched patches, *more Hibernico*. On the left were the cheerless steeps of the Currawn mountains, just described. At the southern extremity of the Sound rose the round hills of Achilbeg, an island containing several hundred acres, having the advantage of a small harbour, and a fishery which might be made most productive. We landed close to the foot of the old square tower of Kilkurnet, one of Grania Waile's castles. Doona Castle, to the north of the sound (on Tullaghan Bay), and Kilkurnet Tower to the south, were doubtless important posts for the occupation and defence of these wild and once lawless districts. Here, as in Clare Island, Grace O'Malley, Queen of the Isles of the West, held despotic sway; and it is curious to observe how completely to the present day the strongholds of her power are to be traced. The old tower of Kilkurnet is interesting, from its comparative completeness, and the expense of repairing it would be trifling. It is firmly founded on the solid rock, against which the sea-wave ever beats; while the thickness of its walls, and the

height of its battlements, give the idea of great strength and capability of defence. It is constructed on the plan of many of the border strongholds in England and Scotland, consisting of one huge square tower, with a low entrance towards the north. The windows, if such they may be called, and loop holes, are irregularly distributed at a considerable elevation on all sides of the building; and it must, in the day of its power, have afforded a secure retreat. As we again embarked, after I had inspected the country around, the extreme clearness of the water struck me: so clear, indeed, was it, that I could see down to the yellow sand, where the seaweed might be distinguished, fathoms below, waving upon the scattered rocks. The scene, as we returned to the ferry, was one of extreme desolation; the old deserted tower of Kilkurnet, the ruined church and thickly crowded cemetery close by, the blackened gables of deserted dwellings, the numberless garden patches now producing nothing but masses of rank weeds, all looked as if a hostile army had passed along, and left the traces of its progress in every nook and corner of this fine, but dreary district. To add to the wildness of the scene, a hollow moaning wind sprang up; the mists descended thick from the mountains of Currawn; the curlew flew wildly about, piping its shrill whistle, and the ill-omened cormorant scudded so close upon the rising waves, that he seemed to be almost sailing upon them. The further I travel westward, the more visible are the ravages of *neglect*, and of improvident legislation. The race of men certainly improves, but their condition, if possible, deteriorates. These are, however, the regions for English enterprize; and I more and more acknowledge the wise policy of the Government, in facilitating the

transfer of these fine and most improvable properties into hands capable of developing their resources. From the Ferry to the Colony is a long, dreary, but withal not uninteresting drive. This establishment is peculiar, and in every point full of interest to either party, whether favourable or adverse to the scheme. My time did not allow me to inquire so minutely into its progress and objects as to enable me to state any opinions of my own upon the subject, and I shall therefore confine myself to a few facts. Achill contains an area of nearly 50,000 acres, and the population numbers about 6000 souls. At the time of the establishment of the "Mission," in 1833, the natives were almost wholly Roman Catholics, and there does not appear to have been either any resident Protestant minister, or any stated public worship. The "Mission," in furtherance of their purpose, procured a tract of land, including the valley of Doogurt, on the western side of which they have built the settlement, or Colony, as it is usually called. Above this place rises the high and peaked mountain of Slieve-more, and below, in the valley, are gardens and fertile fields reclaimed from the waste. It is highly creditable to the managing residents here, to see how rapidly and effectually they are converting a mere morass into smiling gardens and fertile lands; and it were worse than unjust not only to notice but to record the fact, that previous to their introduction to the island, there seems to have been no one to care for the poor, to supply their wants, or to instruct their ignorance. I have been informed by a gentleman intimately connected with the island, that the population, previous to the "Protestant wedge" being inserted there, was in a positive state of the grossest barbarism. Indeed, in

some of the villages on the south coast they are little, if any, better now ; as I can attest from my own observation. It was after many difficulties, and much opposition, that the colonists at length gained a footing ; and several schools have been established in various parts of the island, and three churches are already built, or in the course of erection. There is also an establishment called the "Orphan Refuge," whose object is the education of the children of Roman Catholic parents in the Protestant faith. One hundred children are here boarded, lodged, clothed, and educated, from a fund distinct from that of the Mission. The females, when sufficiently advanced, are sent out as servants : some of the boys are provided for in the same way, but more are brought up to trades. There are also established, under Dr. Adams, a hospital and a dispensary. The former is for the reception of settlers, and of others also, I believe, as accommodation allows. At the latter, advice and medicine are given to the islanders and the inhabitants of the surrounding districts. These particulars I have abridged from a small pamphlet, entitled, "A brief Statement of the Origin and Progress of the Achill Mission." Of the working of this Mission, of its spirit, of its controversies with the Archbishop of Tuam and his clergy, of its capabilities for good and the extent of its powers, I am ignorant. My sojourn in this Protestant valley was short, and I had no opportunities of forming any opinion as to its merits or its demerits, if any. In even a mere temporal sense, the benefits must be very considerable to the formerly neglected population of this island. In Dr. Adams, I was informed, they had a kind and most humane friend, who thus devotes the remainder of a long life to the good of his suffering fellow-creatures.

It was with a deep feeling of respect and veneration that I took off my hat to this genuine philanthropist, as I passed him driving along the road in his carriage, probably on some errand of mercy.

Early on the morning after my arrival, I ascended Slievemore. It is a somewhat arduous undertaking, but the views from the summit amply repaid the fatigue. The whole of Achill lay below me like a map, as also the broad Atlantic to the west, Blacksod Bay and the islands of Inniskea to the north. Eastward, the long range of the Ballycroy mountains formed a glorious crescent, as indeed they do from every point along this coast; while numberless inlets of the sea, lakes, and estuaries, gleamed afar, amid dreary wastes or partially cultivated shores. But what struck me most was, the bay formed by the promontory of Oughnaderk and Saddle Head. Here the cliffs rise up perpendicularly to a considerable elevation, and in one place display, as it were on a shelf hemmed in by impending rocks, the dark waters of Lough Nakeiroge. It was almost awful, though the day was calm, to see the wild tumult of the long waves, as they rolled in from the Atlantic and broke with resistless uproar against those cliffs, which spurned them back again, filling the air with spray, and covering the far-off sea with semicircles of foam. What must this fierce contest of waves and rocks be when a storm rages over the wide ocean beyond, and sends its immense billows against this iron-bound coast? The walk from Slievemore by Saddle Head, and the bold precipices of Croaghan Mountain, to Achill Head and Keem, I may boldly assert, cannot be surpassed. Those in search of the really sublime should by no means visit Achill without exploring these scenes, of which no description

of mine can give even a faint idea : I feel, in fact, that you must be already wearied with my descriptive attempts, and you will remark how often my admiration of the wild or the beautiful withdraws my attention from the main object of these rambles. Were it not for this, I could fill many sheets in detailing to you all of the strange and the grand I witnessed in this day's excursion. Saddle Head rises upwards of 500 feet from the sea, and the summit of Croaghan is about 2200. This mountain, from whatever side you view it, is certainly one of the most remarkable in Ireland. Its peaked summit is supported on two sides by immense buttresses of rock, terminating on the land side in a hollow, which is occupied by a solitary lake, and, towards the Atlantic, rising from the very water's edge, and forming inaccessible precipices of more than a thousand feet in height. Here, indeed, is clearly manifest some violent disruption, which, severing the mountain into two parts, hurled one half into the deep abysses of the ocean. There is a tradition strongly impressed on the minds of the inhabitants of this coast, that Ireland is a mere inferior portion of a vast continent, which stretched far westward into the Atlantic. The distinct severance of one half of Croaghan Mountain, and the roots of large trees still visible on the coast below the water mark near Doona, go far to establish this theory. Keem is a most romantic spot. Two of the offshoots of Croaghan, jutting out into the sea, form a lovely little bay, in the hollow of which is situated the village, watered by a mountain stream. As I stood on the summit of one of these bold promontories, the scene below was calm and interesting, particularly after penetrating the sublime solitudes of Nakieroge and Achill Head. Nine or ten boats were

clustered together just outside the bay, engaged in fishing; while a hooker, with her sail furled, lay quietly at anchor in the offing, waiting to purchase the fish as it was brought in, with the view of taking it to Westport for inland distribution. It was an interesting scene of peaceful industry, which one would wish might be oftener witnessed on these coasts, where Providence has amply provided for the wants and even the luxuries of man, would he only take possession of them. The mountain slopes around Keem are celebrated for the fine and well flavoured mutton they produce. Sheep, however, I saw none; but many hill cattle and kyloes, which certainly did credit to their pasture. Some were grazing quietly amid fearful precipices, and every ravine contained some picturesque groups of these hardy and adventurous mountaineers. The absence of sheep was accounted for by one of the farmers, whom we met and questioned. He said they could not be safely trusted to stray over the mountain as formerly. Since the great potato rot numbers had been stolen every year, and he had himself lost, in a few weeks, no less than forty sheep and twelve lambs ready for the butcher. They were actually taken, he said, from the very shed in which they had been locked up for shelter and safety. "If, however," continued the poor fellow, "it plazes the Almighty to send a good potato harvest, sure, it will all go well agen, and the poor cratur's will forget all about it entirely." Descending this eastern elbow of Croaghan, I passed through the miserable (oh, how miserable!) villages of Dooagh and Keel. The huts, if indeed they may be even so called, are huddled together without any regularity or order, and they reminded me more of what I had read of Indian groups of

wigwams, than the abodes of a Christian population ; and yet, all around, Nature seemed kind and bountiful. On every side I observed fine crops of potatoes and oats, and fish and fuel were in abundance ! In the famine, this island suffered dreadfully ; and I heard an intelligent landowner assert, that the living could scarcely bury the dead. There may be the usual amount of exaggeration in this ; but all accounts agree in representing the mortality as fearful. Many were buried where they were found starved to death. The truth of this I myself remarked, on one occasion, as I passed along the shores of the large lake of Keel. Two headstones, near the road, marked the grave of one whose body had been found lifeless on the spot. It is but justice to the Mission to say, that through their indefatigable exertions and generous efforts, the inhabitants were saved from almost utter annihilation.

The Keel lake, along the shores of which I was passing, was beautifully tranquil. It lay in the centre of a considerable plain, bounded on every side by mountains except the south, where it approaches within a mile of the lovely bay of Tramore. A small river connects it with the sea. I have seldom seen a view more striking than the one I gazed upon as I stood on the little bridge which crosses the stream just mentioned. To the north, the gigantic Slievemore stood out singly against the clear sky ; to the west, the craggy summit of Croaghan ; eastward, the tremendous cliffs of Minnaane rising perpendicularly from the sea more than 800 feet, along the very edge of which was visible the giddy, dangerous path made by the natives to the neighbouring valley of Dooega. To the southward, what was wanting in the sublime was fully compensated by unexampled

loveliness, A calm quiet sea rolled gently upon the most beautiful sandy beach that eyes ever gazed upon. The rocky island of Inishgaloon, with its remarkable cavern, lay close on the western shore ; and in the far distance, over an immense surface of dark blue sea, were seen the high cliffs of Clare Island ; and, further still, Inishturc and the mountains of Murrisk ; and far beyond again, almost vanishing into haze, the pointed summits of the Twelve Pins of Connemara. I did not return to the Colony, but late in the evening reached the Sound of Achill, after a most interesting ramble. The soils of this beautiful island are various, but do not certainly, as a whole, warrant the epithet so often applied, of barren. I saw many fertile spots, many highly improvable ; and the universal voice of the West of Ireland proclaims the Keem-fed mutton to be unrivalled. The geological structure is uniform : mica slate, intermixed with quartz rocks, every where prevails, except on the southern portion of the Currawn mountains, where the old red sandstone is found. So abundant, occasionally, is the mica on the surface of the rocks, particularly on parts of Slievemore, that when the sun glances upon it, it shines like gold. The detritus of this rock is generally remarked as fertile. Near Keem I picked up several tolerable specimens of what the people here call amethysts ; the crystals thus coloured by nature were pretty and curious. To the ornithologist this island must afford a rich treat. I noticed several kinds of the seagull, and many birds that I had not before seen. An eagle of the large grey species (*Aquila albicilla*) was gorging himself near the Keem lake as we passed, and on being disturbed, joined his partner at some distance off, when both majestically soared aloft towards the in-

accessible cliffs of Minnaane. The work of death or of expatriation has been busy in Achill. On the south side of Slievemore I passed by one village of more than thirty houses, that seemed almost entirely deserted. The small burial ground near it was crammed with recent occupants, and my young guide informed me that of those whom famine and disease had spared, many were now in America. It had been a pleasant location, and even now, its green knolls, its romantic dingles, and clear streamlets from the mountain side, were lovely to look upon. The words of Goldsmith had often recurred to my mind as I contemplated these scenes: —

“ Scourged by famine, from the smiling land
The mournful peasant leads his humble band;
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms — a garden, and a grave.”

CHAP. XIV.

SLIEVEMORE.—MEILAN.—DR. MAC HALE AND THE REFORMED
DIVINES OF ACHILL.

ANXIOUS to have another ramble in Achill, and to study yet more closely the geographical position of the neighbouring districts in relation to each other, I left the little inn at the Sound, and, crossing the ferry, took a quiet walk along the southern base of Slievemore to the signal tower, which commands extensive views, particularly over Blacksod Bay, and the distant lands of Upper Erris. The day was hot, not a single cloud darkened the blue skies, a summer stillness prevailed, and for miles I saw no living creature; no sheep congregated on the hill, no herd lowed in the valley. Traces of former human occupation were, however, frequently visible; roofless buildings were too often to be met with in pleasant nooks and grassy dingles. It was impossible, while gazing on this scene, not to think of the emigrants who had once dwelt here, and whose present hardships in a foreign land must of necessity be heightened by bitter regrets for what they had lost, and by the constantly recurring question of, ‘Why were they compelled to desert their native land, when they were ready enough to work, and the soil gave an ample return to labour?’ It is certainly an enigma not easily solved by a wandering Saxon. The question arose to

my mind—Suppose an English was substituted for an Irish population in one of these settlements, possessing precisely the same advantages and disadvantages of position, would the same result ensue? Would the same squalid poverty, the same apathy, the same servility and want of enterprize be apparent in the one as in the other after the lapse of a few years? I cannot believe they would; and yet we are told that the Irish emigrants, when settled in America, are as cleanly in their persons and in their houses, as industrious in their habits and independent in their feelings, as any other class among whom they are mingled! Education certainly would do much—example more—to raise these unfortunates in the scale of civilization. In their native country they are retained in ignorance, and they have no examples before them among their own class to work any reformation in their domestic habits; but, when released from the fetters that thus bind them in their native land, they seem to breathe a freer air, their habits become more assimilated to those of the people around them, and such physical and moral virtues as they may possess have a better chance of development.

From the lovely lough of Keele, which I again visited, my road lay over the cliffs of Minnaane, before mentioned, to Dooega, another of those miserable villages which disgrace this island. Much as I had already discovered in Achill of the sublime in scenery, this walk afforded me views equal to any I had seen, those, perhaps, excepted near Saddle Head. The path in one part runs along the very verge of the precipice; and a person who had been sent from Dooega to meet me, pointed out a spot from whence a poor widow and her seven children had fallen, and been of course dashed in pieces,

during the prevalence of a thick fog. Following the valley from Dooega upwards, I passed Meillan where the respected rector of the parish has taken up his abode, and where he has collected together, with praiseworthy zeal, a considerable congregation. He has also schools, connected, I presume, with the Mission; and it seems probable that ere another generation has passed away, the effects of these efforts must become strikingly visible.

As I made my way from Dooega into the interior of the island there were manifest symptoms of excitement abroad. People were seen in their best garments descending the hills, and hurrying in groups along the roads; and in answer to my inquiries, I was informed that Dr. Mac Hale, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Tuam was that day to visit this portion of his diocese. On what errand the various groups I overtook were bound, whether to greet this dignitary, or from mere curiosity, I did not venture to inquire, but hurried on to see the reception of the once all-powerful, spiritual lord of this island. Meeting with a person having much the appearance of a Scripture reader, for several of these functionaries are employed by the Mission, I was informed by him that the rector of the island, the Rev. Mr. Seymour, had printed and sent a challenge to Dr. Mac Hale, to dispute, in presence of the people, on thirteen propositions, embodying the principal differences between the Roman and Anglican Churches; and this challenge was not only extensively placarded all over the island, but with another and very energetic missive from the Colony, penned by the Rev. Mr. Nangle, was dropped along the public roads of the neighbouring districts, as a ready mode of general distribution. Of these

I myself picked up several as I travelled next day through a portion of Ballycroy. My informant presented me with copies of both the letters to Dr. Mac Hale. That by the Rev. Mr. Seymour was written in a firm and not ungentlemanly spirit for an Irish theologian; the other was of the John Knox school, and boiled over with all the vehemence of Protestant indignation. The rector's letter was addressed "To the Most Rev. Dr. Mac Hale," and commenced, "Most Rev. Sir,—" "As a minister of the Gospel of Christ, it is my solemn duty to feed those committed to my charge with the bread of everlasting life, and to warn them against all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word. Therefore, having learned that it is your intention to visit my parish, and believing you to be a teacher of doctrines damnable and idolatrous, I feel bound by my ordination vows, not only to warn my people against your doctrines, but also to challenge you to prove out of the Sacred Scriptures the truth of the several doctrines undermentioned, which are held by the Church of Rome. I confine myself to the Scriptures as the rule of faith, because I hold with St. Paul 'that they are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus;' and I hold, therefore, with the Catholic Church of this country, that the 'Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation,' " &c. &c. Where, and at what exact time, this discussion was to take place, did not appear to be settled, but the rector of Achill, accompanied by the Rev. Mr. Campbell, the Rev. Mr. M——, his curate, and several Scripture readers, with certain of their friends in the island, certainly did meet the R. C. Archbishop and his accompanying clergy face to face, and did then and there,

at the ferry of the Sound of Achill, give Dr. Mac Hale and his clergy an opportunity of maintaining and proving the doctrines which they preached, if so be they were able and willing so to do. I was not present at this scene, but I was informed that Dr. Mac Hale and his party passed on without deigning to notice either the presence or the challenge of the reformed divines. I was about two miles from the ferry when I first caught sight of the procession. At a distance the scene was animated and picturesque. A number of persons, whether inhabitants or not, I could not tell, followed the carriage or crowded round it, in which sat the Archbishop and his chaplains, I presume. Another carriage followed, containing priests also, as I was informed, then the cortege. At a distance all appeared gay—banners waved, and hats were raised; but when the cavalcade passed me all the romance was gone. Achill contains 6000 inhabitants, but of these scarce a hundred were there. The appearance too of these people was wretched in the extreme; a few, certainly, rode horses, or rather ponies, of the rough hill breed; but otherwise they had no air of substance about them. Most were on foot, keeping up as best they might; and the gay banners, when seen nearer, turned out to be ragged handkerchiefs of coloured cotton, or gaudy remnants of whilom clothing. In the race of violent antagonism, the Roman Catholics of Ireland stand but little chance against the increasing liberalism of the present age. They certainly at present stem the torrent resolutely; but secular education, in spite of all their efforts, will be introduced, and with it an untameable spirit of independence, which augurs ill for their future power, if based on the arbitrary and exclusive principles they at present so boldly

put forward. They are far from politic also in taking up so violent a political position, and in using their spiritual influence for secular purposes. They gain nothing by this but the suspicion and distrust of those who would be their friends; and the hostile attitude they too often assume towards England, by retarding improvement and the introduction of capital, perpetuates misery and degradation among their unfortunate fellow-countrymen. And yet they can number many devoted servants of their Lord and Master—men who labour in season and out of season for the good of their flocks—who leave polemics to the more bitter spirits among them, and are anxious only to perform their duties and to live in peace.

When the procession had passed, and I was left alone and in silence on the mountain side, many painful thoughts arose from the scene I had witnessed. It appeared that religion here brought with it not peace, but a sword! "Peace on earth, good will towards men," is the inscription on the Christian banner. What construction then was I to put upon the scene so lately before my eyes? Could I, or could any rational well-judging Christian, assert that salvation is confined to either church? Why then all this fierce antagonism? If men will fight for heaven, let it be the good fight of faith, of mutual love and forbearance. These fierce religious contests have no religion in them. Where is that "lowliness and meekness with long suffering, forbearing one another in love," which the Apostle so strongly sets forth as the very marrow and pith of Christian principle? Where men are in error they will seldom be coerced into the truth; the natural obstinacy of human nature is roused, and passion blocks up the

way to reason. The spirit of a man rises when he is branded with hard names ; and many, be they heathens or schismatics, who from conviction might have embraced the truth, feel a repugnance to join those who exhibit such undisguised abhorrence of what they have been taught in early years to believe and to reverence. Nay, I will go further than this ; I assert that many good Protestants have grown lukewarm in the cause of reformation in consequence of the over zeal of their own party, and many enlightened Roman Catholics are beyond measure pained at the blind and coercive bigotry of their brethren. In the endeavour to take away from the mass of the people all reverence for that faith in which they were brought up, the Irish reformers ought to be sure that they give them something better. At present, in a moral point of view, the priests possess and exercise considerable influence over their flocks for good ; it is of vital importance to know what new influences are to be put in motion when the old ones are destroyed. If hatred and emulation and strife are to be inculcated as principles of action,—if the population are to be arrayed one against another in a spirit of bitter dissension,—if to be a Protestant it is necessary also to be an open and offensive reviler and denouncer of the Romanist,—then I say it is far better to allow matters to remain as they are. In these remarks I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I am glancing at no particular persons, I am speaking generally of Ireland and its religious condition. The Irish people are shrewd enough to form a judgment between parties, and the sight of a hard-working, charitable, beneficent, and peaceable body of clergy among them, would produce a far more lasting effect upon their minds, than a thousand tomes of theological casuistry.

As education and enlightenment advance, exclusiveness becomes weaker ; men are beginning, even in Ireland, to think for themselves. The human will is at this moment, all the world over, taking up a position, I say not whether for good or evil, such as it never before so generally asserted since the dispersion of the nations over the earth. If differences could be merged, if hatred and emulation could be thrown aside, if the various bodies of Christians could be brought to work together in peace, endeavouring, each, rather to amend themselves than to convert others, the truth would have a better chance of ultimate victory. Varieties of forms, differences of church government, there might be ; but vital Christianity would be strengthened and increase, the causes of separation would wax fainter and fainter, till the greater body of Christians, seeing no victory was to be won but over their adversary the devil, would be more inclined to merge differences, to forget injuries, and to unite in forming what Christ intended his Church to be—"one fold under one shepherd."

CHAP. XV.

BALLYCROY. — MR. MAXWELL. — CROY LODGE. — DOONA
CASTLE. — FAHY LOUGH.

THE district known as Ballycroy, a peculiar but very fine tract of country, comprehends the southern portion of the Half Barony of Erris. Apart from the occasional beauty of the scenery, it wears at present a wild and dreary aspect; but the agricultural eye wanders over it at the same time with delight and impatience: delight, to witness such an accumulation of capabilities; impatience, to see them undeveloped. A short description will soon convey to you a pretty exact idea of the situation of this almost unknown and unvisited tract. Imagine a vast plain with an irregular surface stretching down to a shore of more than ten miles in extent, and indented with numerous bays and creeks, and the broad estuaries of three considerable rivers,—the Owenmore, the Owenduff, and the Owen-a-vrea or Bellaveeny river. These all take their rise from mountain lakes, of which some are between one and two thousand feet above the level of the plain, and numerous tributaries are distributed over the whole district, sometimes falling over rocky beds, sometimes wending their more quiet course through deep hollow banks of alluvial soil. This plain is pleasingly diversified also by many abrupt knolls and ridgy hills of low elevation, and near its centre rises

the conical mountain of Gloré Slieve, rising about 900 feet from the level of the sea. But the grand feature of Ballycrov is the semicircular range of mountains so often described, by which this fine tract is enclosed, inclining from the north far to the eastward, and returning again with a graceful sweep to the southwest. These do not form one continuous ridge, but each mountain generally rises from its own base, and they exhibit between them deep and romantic valleys, presenting in the many alternations of light and shade a variety of prospects, no less interesting than diversified, made up of rocky masses, heathy slopes, lofty precipices, deep ravines, and craters now occupied by silent lakes, all sinking into shadow or lighting up into brilliance, according as the sun is obscured, or bursts out again from the clouds that oppress its splendour. In the centre stands Nephin Beg, rising almost perpendicularly from the vale of Mamarattah, through which and the adjoining district of Lurgandarrigg runs the principal source or stream of the Owenduff river. To the left are Slieve Alp, Corse-lieve and Lettercuss, their bases watered by tributaries of the same river; and to the right of Nephin Beg, making a rapid bend towards the south-west, are the lofty peaks above Carreg-a-binnio, and those of Slieve Thaumaus, Glendahurk, &c., stretching far westward, till they meet the dark and gloomy heights of Currawn. These mountains, as before stated, are still the refuge of the wild deer; but these animals are now rarely seen, for they confine themselves principally to the most inaccessible heights or the grassy and precipitous edges of the many lonely lakes and solitary glens. Red grouse, hares, snipes, and waterfowl, are in great abundance; the lakes and rivers, nay, even the

very streamlets, abound with fish of unusual weight and excellent flavour; and the woodcock shooting is unsurpassed, the masses of that beautiful shrub called the Mediterranean heath affording a thick covert, and the numerous springs abundance of food. The many creeks and bays, too, contribute their share of enjoyment and profit. Beds of delicious oysters are found; lobsters, and cockles, and other shell-fish abound, and the sea waters teem with almost every description of fish, sufficient, were industry and capital at hand, to supply the whole island. Salmon frequents most of the rivers in Erris; and though the fisheries are far from being conducted as they should be, there is still a large quantity of salmon caught every season, while enough is left to afford abundant sport to the angler. The Owen-a-vrea or Bellaveeny river is small, but contains trout, which do not appear early, and are generally in most abundance about August. A little care and outlay, I was informed, would also make this, to some extent, a salmon river, but I should much doubt it. There are many of those deep pools and rapid currents so congenial to the habits of this king of the fishes, in the Owenduff river, and also in the Owenmore, but the inexcusable and pernicious habit of torch-light poaching has been carried on there to a destructive extent, from the absence of common care and vigilance. There are many methods of killing the salmon: sometimes the poachers form a kind of weir in the shallows, by placing large stones across the river, and as the fish are thus forced to show themselves as they ascend, they are knocked on the head or speared by the fellows watching for them. The method of torch-light poaching, or, as they here term it, "burning

the river," is however most destructive, and is practised as the fish ascend the heads of the rivers to deposit their spawn. They use the dried bog wood for torches; and I was informed that in the Pass of Lurricane, where the salmon usually deposit their spawn in one of the principal sources of the Owenduff river, so numerous sometimes are the depredators, that the whole course of the stream for miles may be traced on a dark night by the moving light of these glaring torches. None of these rivers have hitherto been sufficiently guarded; otherwise there are not any superior to them in Ireland. The fox, the otter, and the badger, abound, and the naturalist will here find several species of the eagle, besides many other birds of prey. These make havoc among the game and fish, and were their numbers reasonably diminished, I know no country which would present more unbounded gratification to the sportsman. But it is not these things that so particularly interest me in the contemplation of this district, though as adjuncts to more important advantages they certainly have their weight. The agricultural capabilities of the soil are so manifest everywhere in the plain and on the lower slopes of the mountains, that it seems surprising that this district has for so many ages been so little known, and so partially cultivated. Under a proper system of culture this land would have yielded employment and food for multitudes, whereas now it has barely supported a scanty and scattered population of a few hundreds, and returned to the proprietor a mere acknowledgment of ownership in the shape of paltry rents for the pasturage of cattle. On the banks of the rivers and brooks large tracks of deep alluvial soil are to be found, which only require fencing and partially draining

to form meadows of immediate value. On these spots also, if reduced into tillage, would grow crops of grain with little help; but if well and generously farmed would amply repay the labour and capital bestowed upon them. The Bellaveeny Estate*, which lies at the foot of the Greenaun and Claggan mountains, particularly bears out this description. The verdant banks of this stream, and the many tributaries which flow into it, invite that attention which they have never yet received, and it is impossible not to perceive at a glance that a valuable property might be formed from many thousand acres of land now lying neglected and almost desert. Adjoining this property are the townlands of Shrahduggane and Bellygarvaun, both including some fine mountain slopes, as well as a considerable extent of plain. The vegetable soil or bog is not too deep here to enable the subsoil to be raised to the surface; and were the prices of produce in a fair degree remunerative, there is no doubt but that arable cultivation would here make a large and steady return. Even in their present condition, they afford excellent pasturage to a large number of cattle and sheep, but this by a judicious system of drainage might be augmented in a threefold proportion. The large plain of Ballycroy affords, from the unevenness of its surface, and its gradual slope towards the sea from the base of the mountains, unusual facilities for draining. Few of those almost interminable flats which are observable in the interior of Ireland, and especially in the Bog of Allen, are to be found in this district, the surface everywhere either

* This townland, together with Shrahduggane and Bellygarvaun which adjoin it, are now the property of an Englishman by recent purchase.

undulates or slopes seaward; and taking any of the townlands, it will generally be found that a few mains will be sufficient to receive all the other drains requisite for its reclamation. What the many knolls and long low ridges contain I know not as yet, probably clay or gravelly loam, either of which, though inferior to lime, gravel, or marl, spread upon the surface of the bog, greatly assists in reducing it to a friable mould. In one place, near the chapel, I procured some sand, forming a stratum under either the clay or gravel. This, on being tested, betrayed the presence of lime; and it is possible that much of this may be found in various parts, and would form, in the interior portions of the plain, an excellent substitute for the coral sand of the coast. The profitable improvement of these and similar waste lands is no longer a theory but a fact. Mr. R. Griffith, than whom no one from his extended experience is capable of giving a better opinion, has published a somewhat startling statement on the subject. Having described his general plan of improvement to be the increasing the quantity and quality of the mountain pasture, by forming one large drain on the mountain side for the purpose of irrigation, and that this simple operation would increase the means of rearing five to one, and that 100,000 acres could be improved in this way, he adds, "If the more detailed plan of irrigation (alluding to Mr. Nimmo's plan for the Kerry mountains) were adopted, the quantity of hay would become so great, that the farmer would be obliged to vary his species of stock to consume it; he must then have recourse to stall feeding, which would necessarily induce the growth of turnips and a detail of agriculture for *which the country is by no means*

prepared (?) It appears, then, that in Mr. Griffith's opinion the fertility of certain of the waste lands, under a proper system of drainage, would be absolutely too great for the wants of the population; but as this was written in 1835, I believe matters may now be much altered. Mr. Nimmo in his evidence before a parliamentary committee, in 1819, makes this declaration: — "I am so perfectly convinced of the practicability of converting the bogs I have surveyed into arable land, and that, too, at an expence that need hardly ever exceed *the gross value of one year's crop produced from them*, that I declare myself willing, for a reasonable consideration, to undertake the drainage of any given piece of any considerable extent, and the formation of its roads for one guinea per acre." The remarks I have made upon Bellaveeny, &c., apply to the other townlands of the district in a greater or less degree: in some portions the bog lands are deeper, in some less in quantity, being replaced on the higher grounds by green upland pasture; but everywhere the banks of the streams are of nearly the same valuable character, and the hills, though of course varying, yet afford on every side abundant pasture, with pleasant springs and stream-lets. As the slopes from the mountains approach the coast, several gentle swells occur, such as those called Castle Hill, the Hill of Claggan, Dringollah, &c., where much land is now in cultivation by small farmers, and where there is also a good dry sandy loam, easily worked at all seasons of the year. From these eminences, the views are truly magnificent; and if the many small and inconvenient enclosures were thrown together, the holdings consolidated, and a proper system of cropping and

working adopted, I do not know more fertile or valuable farms than these would make. Near the shore are occasionally small plains, consisting principally of sandy soil, where the shamrock grows in great abundance, and which by proper attention might be made capable of fattening bullocks. Portions of the townlands of Doreel and Fahy answer this description. Finding that I had yet some time on my hands, I extended my rambles to the northern portion of Ballycroy, crossing the river Ovenduff above the salmon weir, over a strongly built stone bridge, near which is the pleasantly situated Lodge of Mr. Davison, who with Mr. Amber, an English gentleman, has taken, on a long lease, a considerable tract of these lands from Sir Richard O'Donnell. Mr. Amber lives at another lodge a few miles distant, nearer the centre of their property, and at both places improvements are being rapidly and scientifically executed upon a large scale. The success of these enlightened settlers is likely to have a great effect on the future prospects of the whole district. As I before remarked, such men are real patriots, and the blessings they confer upon a district such as Ballycroy are beyond all calculation, provided only that they are enabled to persevere and to conquer finally all the numerous obstacles that must impede their progress. Recent legislation has certainly, by lowering prices, done much to discourage these bold individual efforts, but the English or Scotch settler is not easily daunted; and judging from the extent of works in progress near the residences of these gentlemen, and the abundant employment they are giving to the labourers of the district, I could not but surmise that they see their way to a successful

result.* From Mr. Davison's Lodge, I proceeded up the beautiful river Owenduff to another lodge built by T. O. Lees, Esq., who, principally for the purpose of angling, resides for a portion of the year in this locality. Near this place the river divides into two considerable streams, the one called the Tarsaghanemore, the other the Owenduff, both taking their rise in the mountains eastward, the former from the Glen-na-degan, and the latter from the lake of Corranabinna, far to the south or south-east. Close to the Owenduff is a sporting lodge, built, I was told, either by Mr. Maxwell or Mr. Vernon, and surrounded by every inducement for the lover of the rod and gun. I saw it indistinctly when I ascended the summit of the Carregabinniog mountain, but was unable that day to visit it as I had intended. The various pools in these rivers are noted resorts of salmon; and here, amid the grandest of Nature's scenes the angler may enjoy himself to his heart's content. Again, passing by Mr. Davison's house, I made my way by a road, skirted on each side by flourishing potato and oat grounds, to Croy Lodge, interesting as having once been the residence of Mr. Maxwell, whose lively, and in the main correct descrip-

* I regret sincerely to say that this is not the case. These gentlemen, unable to continue the large scale of improvements which they had commenced, with any prospect of a sufficient immediate return in the present state of agriculture, have surrendered their leases. Had their operations been more limited they might have succeeded better. A portion of these lands have been purchased by an English gentleman of enterprise and capital, and the remainder, I believe, is also disposed of to another party from the same country. Any friend of Ireland must hail these facts as encouraging and important. The far west seems at present the favourite district for English and Scotch investment, and I am not surprised.

tions of this district are well known to the public. My intelligent guide over the mountains from Newport into Ballycroy knew Mr. Maxwell well, had often accompanied him in his shooting excursions, and bore willing testimony to the veracity of his statements. It is impossible to read the "Wild Sports of the West," without the deepest interest; for apart from its many lively legends and stirring incidents by field and flood, it gives a more veritable description of Irish scenery and manners in these remote parts, than any work I have hitherto met with. To Mr. Maxwell Ballycroy is also much indebted for the first detailed notice that ever appeared of its beauties and capabilities. His eloquent work was so universally read, that many were thereby induced to relax their prejudices, and to visit a country which before was deemed inaccessible, and its inhabitants savage and unapproachable. Croy Lodge is a long building, without pretensions, situated near the outlet of the river into Tullaghane Bay, and on the tongue of land which divides the the Ballycroy river from the still larger Owenmore. Here great numbers of salmon are annually caught, averaging, I was told, not fewer than 500 per day during the season! Remembering, as I well did, all the pleasant scenes passed at this spot, as narrated by Mr. Maxwell, I was deeply interested; and as the day was not far spent, and the tide was running out, I took a boat across the ferry, and landing on the opposite side of the river, walked over the most delightful sands I ever trod to Lough Fahy and the old castle of Doona. Lough Fahy, or Fach-ey, as it is pronounced, is a lake of considerable size, receiving the sea-water at full tides; and between it and the sea-shore is a rocky isthmus, on a point of

which is situated the old castle or fortalice of Doona. As we approach, leaving the shores of Tullaghan Bay behind us, we look out into the far Atlantic, having a bar or sand bank opposite, over which the wild surge was beating violently. A curious geological fact before noticed here caused me to pause for a moment. The roots of huge trees, in some cases rising a foot from the level of the sand, frequently interrupted my path. They were covered by the sea when the tide was in, and, strange to say, they seemed to grow in a boggy stratum, thinly covered with sand, though no bog was visible on the shore for a considerable distance. Was Doona Castle, then, built on the margin of an extensive forest, reaching to the very sea? or was this portion of the coast submerged previous to its erection? The nearer I approached the Castle, the wilder became the scene. Gusts of wind drove up the small flying clouds from the distance, and as the waves broke upon the sandy beach, the spray would often sweep over me in showers. When within a short distance of the promontory, I found the sands, which had hitherto afforded a level road, encumbered with masses of rocks, of all shapes and sizes, and rendered slippery by seaweed. Picking my way carefully and with some toil through this labyrinth, I at length gained the Castle, and seating myself upon a mass of fallen wall, the highest attainable point, I gazed long upon the singular scene before me. It was a complete and noble panorama, a combination of sea and land, plain and mountain, in every variety the imagination can conceive. It would be useless to attempt any description, for the objects were so various, the scene so extensive, that it must be viewed to be understood. Never shall I forget

the appearance of Slievemore from this spot. It rose up singly in the distance, like a vast cone. At this moment, not a cloud rested upon it; the summit reared itself into the heavens, clear and distinct, and, like the Peak of Teneriffe, it seemed to stand solitary and alone on the edge of the boundless ocean. To the east was the fine semicircle of mountains, so often before described, to which the dark and now disturbed lough of Fahy formed an appropriate foreground. This fine lake is remarkable for the innumerable flocks of wild fowl by which it is frequented. Wild ducks, widgeon, teal, Solan geese, swans, and several species of the gull, haunt these lonely waters, and in winter vast numbers might be taken and distributed in the more inland parts at a fair profit. I saw abundance of snipes, not in single pairs, but actually in flocks; and as I walked near the sedgy margin of the lake, these delicious little birds, as well as wild ducks, rose in fresh numbers at almost every step as I advanced.

The Castle, on whose mouldering walls I was now sitting, was appropriately placed as a guard on the entrance of Tullaghane Bay on one side, and the Bull's Mouth on the other. This well-known narrow strait connects Blacksod Bay with the waters of Achill Sound, so that vessels taking this course avoid the stormy and circuitous route of Saddle Head. It is a curious fact that the tides from the north and south both rushing into this channel meet midway, so that a vessel entering from the north takes advantage of the flowing tide for one half of the distance, and of the ebbing tide for the other, and *vice versâ*. Doona Castle* was in an almost

* Though tradition awards the founding of this castle to Grania Waile, I believe it to have been erected centuries before she existed. It has

perfect state within a few years, but it suffered considerable damage from a fire, by which a portion of the main tower was destroyed. In a respectable residence, built under the shelter of the old Castle walls, resides Mrs. Conway, a lady who has experienced many vicissitudes, and who is now waiting calmly for the hour which must end all earthly anxieties and cares. I had the pleasure of sitting with her, and hearing her conversation for some time; and apart from the somewhat national peculiarities of her phraseology, which however were not displeasing, I have seldom met with a person of more ladylike manners and feelings. Her house was a good specimen of Ireland's better days, as indicating the habits of the once respectable class of leaseholders. The porch led into a spacious kitchen, at the further end of which was the parlour. Here the old lady sat, and though, as is now the case with most of her class, fortune has frowned upon her, yet her erect mien, her strictly clean and neat apparel, her countenance expressive at once of trial and resignation, gave a great interest to her personal appearance. The room had its interest also: over the chimney-piece was a print of the *mater dolorosa*, deer's horns decorated the walls, a press or cabinet of black oak, probably from the bogs, filled up one corner, and in another was that rare appendage to an Irish farm-house, a clock in a case of the same wood. This, in Ireland's more palmy days, was ever one of the most hospitable abodes in the

every external and internal mark of a much earlier period, and the surmise of Mr. Maxwell, in his amusing romance of "the Black Lady of Doona," that it was for many ages the stronghold of several successive powerful septs or tribes, and was besieged and taken a forcible possession on by the stern Queen of the West, appears to me most probable.

district, and the name of the Conways will long be remembered after the last representative of the family is called to her final home. The soil around Doona appeared fertile, and I noticed that the crops of various kinds were much earlier than in England. But here, as every where else, energy seems to have departed. Fields once tilled, and capable of bearing any kind of crop, were lying totally neglected, covered with weeds and long grass. The townland is leased out for three lives, of which two are dead and the other aged. It is probable, therefore, that the present occupants feel little interest in improvements, and hope possibly that by leaving the land in bad condition they may be able to retake their holdings on lower terms; at least, this ruse is not unfrequent. Now in such a case the proprietor has no redress; and he is compelled, either at a great cost to take the lands in hand and bring them into letting condition, or he must consent to a ruinous sacrifice, in order to induce a tenant to enter at once. It strikes me, that the Tenant Right cry is absurd in all its bearings, if it blinks *the landlord's right*. If the legislature must interfere at all, which is I conceive both unnecessary and impolitic, it should protect the landlord as well as the tenant. The instances of injury inflicted on landlords are far more numerous than those inflicted on tenants. And this remark I extend to England, and can vouch for its truth from my own experience. In a majority of cases, farms are given up to the landlords in a worse state than the tenants took to them, and the process of recovering damages in these cases is so tedious and so hazardous, that the proprietor had rather submit to the loss than spend money in procuring that redress which the outgoing tenant cannot,

perhaps, or will not, after all, afford to pay. In Ireland, at present, the real value of a property consists in the paucity of its tenants; a property without any tenants at all affords some hope of ultimate improvement by the allocation of a different class of men, *on very different terms*, or by the personal occupation of the proprietor. At present, the latter expedient is the most sure. The number of petty tenants is one of the curses of Ireland, and many of these having the usual leases of thirty-one years, or three lives, the remedy can be but slow. These men subdivide their little farms into the minutest allotments that can be supposed to subsist a human being, and the poor wretched undertenants are thus ground down to the very verge of starvation; nay more, they die in numbers, of famine, on these wretched holdings. Whereas was the English and Scotch system of large farms adopted, the now wretched occupiers of small allotments would become labourers, and the burdens upon land and the condition of the people be altogether improved. Nothing but the keenest distress, and the proved utter impracticability of keeping up the present system, so as to procure any return from their estates, will convince the Irish proprietors of this truth;—it is a truth, however, daily forcing itself on their notice, and in a way, too, they cannot fail to comprehend. Better that Ireland should become one vast sheepwalk, than that it should continue as it now is. And this feeling more and more establishes itself in my mind, as I travel and observe more closely the condition and habits of the people. It seems to be the general impression that under the present system of free trade, the Irish landlord must sink, and his tenantry with him. If the rule is to hold good

(so they argue) that "Irish property must support Irish poverty," and while adding burdens to those which already oppress the proprietors of the soil, you *take away their market*, and thus debar them from finding the means to meet these obligations, the result is a mere matter of arithmetic. The effect of the policy of the government, therefore, appears to be, say they, to drive out the present race and create new interests. The lever is applied to the present system, and it must and will fall to pieces. I myself presume to offer no opinion. The only question, perhaps, for enlightened politicians to decide is, Whether the breaking up of the present state of things could have been less rudely and cruelly accomplished. It is truly lamentable to witness the revolution that is now taking place, particularly in its effects on individual cases, where real patriotism and generous enterprize should, if possible, have caused exceptions. Some of the most zealous improvers that Ireland ever possessed, particularly in the West, having exhausted their means and raised money on their properties under the conviction that remunerative prices would continue, find themselves at once engulfed in the common ruin, without any fault of theirs. Their estates are sold for less than half their supposed value, and they are turned adrift with their families, ruined and destitute. It certainly appears a harsh policy; time must prove how far it has been a wise one. The landowners complain also that these continual changes in the law damp all enterprize, that they are thus debarred, as prudent men, from improving their estates; that they are afraid to give employment to the poor, lest the outlay may never be returned to them; that ~~time~~ should have been given to them to set their houses

in order; and that it was unjust, at one blow, to increase their burdens and decrease their receipts.*

I had sat long on the castle-wall of Doona, wondering how it was that a country so beautiful, so blessed by Heaven, could be thus desolate and wretched, when my eye wandering over the dark and gloomy Lough Fahy caught sight of a procession slowly approaching a ruined church that stood bleak and lonely on the hill side. It was a funeral. I had heard of Irish funerals, but never having witnessed one, I descended from my position, and took a circuitous direction to the spot. To my surprise there was no lamentation, nor, indeed, any sound save the heavy tread of the bearers, who, when they had deposited their burden within the ruin, at once departed. I raised myself upon the stone work of what had once been the chancel, and watched the proceedings within. The coffin, which

* The present position of the Irish proprietors may be guessed from the following paragraph in "The Times," of October the 18th.—"Mr. Commissioner Curran held a Court at Castlebar yesterday, for the relief of insolvent debtors. There were 19 applicants seeking to be discharged. They were of a class of persons totally different from those who usually appear in courts of this description. One is a landed proprietor whose rental was estimated at from 2,000*l.* to 3,000*l.* per annum, and he is also a deputy lieutenant and magistrate for the county. Another is, or was, an extensive Government contractor, who some years since purchased a considerable estate in this county (Mayo), and was supposed to be very wealthy. A third is a landed proprietor, and justice of the peace near this town. A fourth is a landed proprietor, and magistrate of this county, and an extensive grazing farmer, and the fifth is one of the oldest and most upright magistrates of the county; the owner of a small estate, and also a very extensive grazer and tillage farmer. The case of this gentleman excited considerable interest in court, because of his age, upwards of seventy years, and the unblemished character for honesty and integrity which he had hitherto borne."

was a mere deal box of the rudest workmanship, rested on the ground ; several persons were engaged removing some stones from the surface. This done, they scratched away a few inches' depth of — I would willingly call it mould or earth — but it was not quite that, it was a substance well known in Metropolitan church-yards. This done, they raised a similar box, which was now exposed to view, and *in its place* they crammed the one just brought. Around was scattered a shocking collection of skulls, tibiae, and other bones. I counted twenty-four skulls. The accumulation of decayed animal matter reached up to the piscina, or place for holy water, so as almost to conceal it, and the feter was so noisome that I turned away with disgust. Nothing in unfortunate Ireland has so completely convinced me of the debased condition of the people as these melancholy exhibitions. They are a disgrace to the country, negating its pretensions to be considered a civilized or Christian land. The destitution, the filth, the nakedness of the Irish cottage may be removed by removing the poverty which engendered them ; faults, no doubt, they are, and grievous ones, but they are the faults of circumstance : here it is the heart, the moral feeling that is deficient ; men, nay, even women, can stand by and see the remains of all they held dear crammed for a while into a mere shallow hole till the place is wanted for some other tenant, and then the body is dragged from its resting-place, and exposed on the bare earth for dogs to devour, and the elements to do their work upon it. A custom like this is no less detrimental to the health than to the morals, and many places are rendered by it almost inaccessible to those who are not

habituated to such things. I remember, many years ago, a friend of mine complaining to me that he could not enter Mucruss Abbey, close to the residence of the Protestant Herberts.* Cong Abbey, one of the most interesting remains in Ireland, is, as I have before mentioned, similarly desecrated, and yet with one honourable exception, I have heard no voice raised against this unchristian and indelicate custom. "Oh, we are used to it," was the constant reply to my remonstrances. And so may a man become used to any other atrocity, but habit is no apology for a thing which in itself is evil. I returned to Croy Lodge through the Bent Banks, being huge drifts of sand, favourable for the procreation of rabbits. I did not, however, see many. The warren seems neglected, like everything else; for there is no sale either for rabbits or their skins. During the war these warrens were very profitable. The skins alone sold at from 10s. to 14s. per dozen. As I cast back a parting glance upon this once celebrated domain, I could not help applauding the sagacity of Grace O'Malley in choosing this spot as one of her favourite residences. Every luxury of sea and land was within reach. Sea, shell, and fresh-water fish were in inexhaustible abundance, the neighbouring mountains afforded venison and grouse, the warren, rabbits, the lake many species of wild fowl, and the fertile meadows around the Castle fattened her sheep and beeves. In proof of which latter fact, I may mention that there is a fine plain skirting the Bay, on which I saw as I passed over it

* The state of Ross Abbey, in the Earl of Leitrim's park, is detailed in these pages.

many sheep and cattle grazing, apparently in fine condition. As I approached the ferry the wind blew in wild gusts, and raised the sands on the shore, as if it had been mist or vapour. I was glad to find a conveyance waiting for me on the other side, and soon bade adieu to the old Castle of Doona, and all its stirring recollections.

CHAP. XVI.

PASS OF DUKELL. — TERRY SWEENTY. — FARM OF GLENDUFF.

THE time had now come when I was to meet Mr. S—— at Mulrhany. I accordingly left the inn at the Sound of Achill, and again skirting the mountains of Currawn, soon found myself at the appointed place. It was at the spot where the Achill and Ballycroy roads join the main road to Newport Mayo, about ten miles distant from that town. Here is a kind of natural pass, easily defensible against an invading enemy. A wall built across would fortify the whole of the peninsula of Currawn, for Clew Bay on one side, and a long arm of Tullaghan Bay on the other, almost cut it off from the mainland. Ordering the driver of my car to wait at the junction of the roads, I walked leisurely forwards, struck with admiration at the surrounding scenery. To the right, cliff upon cliff rose almost perpendicularly from the verge of the road, and in the various deep clefts grew a profusion of the Mediterranean heath so high that it was difficult for a man to push his way through. When this is in flower the perfume is delicious, and scents the whole pass with its fragrance. Here was another favourite haunt, my post-boy told me, for the wild deer before the “grand” road was made into Ballycroy,—“but you see, your honour, they’re not fond of company, and the sight of the jaunting cars sent

them all to the hills entirely." I was also informed that twenty couple of cocks had been bagged here in one morning by one gun. I noticed several groups of goats peering down upon me from the giddy edges of the cliffs, and many others quietly cropping the patches of green herbage in spots that one would have imagined quite inaccessible. To the left of the road, and divided from it only by a narrow strip of rocky land, was a beautiful inlet of the bay beyond, which, filling up the basin formed by the surrounding heights, spread below us clear and unruffled as a sea of glass. On a small rock at no great distance from the shore, three seals were sporting, and ever and anon the shrill whistle of the curlew skimming the waters, broke the silence that prevailed. A boat with a large angular-shaped sail was now slowly advancing with the tide, for her sail flapped heavily and uselessly, there being not a breath of wind to fill it. Still the craft gave animation to the scene. Soon afterwards a gentleman passed in a tartan jacket, with a servant leading his pony, and followed by four terriers "of the right sort," as the man told me while pausing near the rock against which I was reclining. His master, he said, was going to try the lakes for otters, of which there was great abundance. Thus, amusing myself with the still and the passing scene, I remained for nearly an hour, when the rattle of wheels descending the pass convinced me my new friend was not far distant. He soon came in view. His carriage was a strong-built, high-hung, double phaeton with large wheels, and was drawn by two powerful half-bred horses who stepped along at a very creditable pace. We travelled some miles through a dreary, though to me not uninteresting country, and then stopped at a farmer's

house situated on a dry slope at the foot of the mountains, where we rested for two or three hours. This man, whose name was Sweeny, proved a good specimen of the Irish hill-farmer, and I was much interested during our stay in eliciting from him the particulars of his situation. No easy matter by the by to elicit any thing from these men, which they wish to conceal; they have a power of evasion wonderfully amusing too, if it were not sometimes provoking. They will steer their way on the narrow verge between truth and falsehood with singular facility and adroitness, and I have seen a friend of mine obliged sometimes to lift his stick, and put on a fierce and determined look, before he could extract, even from sundry of his own tenants, a direct answer to the plainest question. The house of this Mr. Terry Sweeny was a long low building, snugly enough thatched, with sundry small square windows. A door of unplanned fir hung upon posts of rude bog oak by a single hinge, for the other was broken, and it was shut only at night-time. You first entered into a spacious room, with a chimney that was large enough below, but so small at the top as not to suffer one half of the smoke to escape, which therefore curled in dusky wreaths along the rafters, making its escape through windows or doors, or any aperture communicating with the light of day. The floor was of the thick, uneven, coarse flag-stone of the neighbourhood, with so many chinks and crevices as to defy the utmost efforts of an English housemaid, with her "brush and pail, or busy broom" to keep it decent. The room, however, had the advantage of being high overhead, and accordingly across the girders that tied the rude thick walls together, was thrown an accumulation of every implement, and every sort of stuff (I

have no other word for it) useful to the worthy inmates, male or female, in time present or to come. Near the huge turf fire, and such turf too, quite equal to Wallsend or Hetton coals, matters were a trifle more tidy; for here in the recess was the "calliough," or bed for the master and mistress, but at the further end of the room was a general repository for live and dead stock of all sorts. Into this corner dust and dirt of all kinds were carefully swept, the inmates seeming to have no idea that it would have been just as easy to sweep such refuse out of doors. Upon the left side of the fire was a small low door, which opened, I suppose, into a dormitory, but I did not penetrate into its mysteries. Here probably the sleeping was managed in the true primitive mode known as "sleeping in *stradogue*." The floor is covered with fresh rushes, and the whole family lie down "dacently," in a certain order, covered with their blankets. Terry Sweeny had a large family. The two elder boys were "out on the mountain" (by which he meant the neighbouring bog) tending the cattle. Three girls, with their mother, were at home, as well as two fine little boys, with faces less smoke-dried than might have been expected. One of the daughters, about eighteen, assisted the mother in the hospitable preparations for dinner; the other two, squatting close to the ground in that peculiar attitude so common in Ireland, particularly among the very young or very aged, silently gazed at us as if we were beings dropped down from another planet. The long dark hair and bright black eyes of these young females betokened Milesian origin, and I could not fail remarking the physical differences in form, complexion, and features, between the mixed race of the Western districts, and the purer Celtic of

the central and eastern counties. The elder sister was decidedly handsome. Her dress, indeed, was scanty; but there was such an artlessness and blushing modesty about her, and something so deliberate and graceful in all her motions, that I could not help fancying her one of the dark-eyed maidens of Granada. Not one word of English could our hostess or her progeny speak; and in truth, Sweeny himself jabbered so quick, and so ran his words into one another, that his English was almost Erse to me. The hospitable reception we met with in this lonely cabaret I shall not easily forget. There were, indeed, no delicacies, if we except a large dish of white trout taken that morning in a river some miles distant by one of the "boys," and not contemptibly prepared by the fair hands of Cathleen; a large tray of "praties," boiled in their skins; and a wooden bowl full of boiled eggs, some of which from their size were undoubtedly the production of a fine flock of geese which were gabbling outside at that instant. The feast was prefaced by a glass of something, not disagreeable, but very "warming," from a huge black bottle just dug up out of the garden*; and after our repast was over, the punch was brewed, there being an ample supply, to my great surprise, of white sugar. "Is it the lemon you're looking at?" said Sweeny to me. "Sure it's mighty handy when the gentlefolks pass, seeing there's no inn in these quarters, to have a good glass of punch to offer them; and what is punch without the lemon? So when I go to Newport Pratt, or to Belmullet, or to Ballina, I always bring one or two of the yellow craturs in my

* The natives think that the flavour of their favourite beverage is much improved by keeping it in the earth.

pocket." After thus refreshing ourselves I was anxious to inspect the premises, and to inform myself as to the mode in which Mr. Terry Sweeny conducted his farm. Adjoining the house, and surrounded by a high wall of large irregular stones, cemented and well splashed with lime, was the cattle yard. A slanting roof from nearly the top of this wall in the interior, formed a long range of sheds; but the thatch was so thin, and in many places so much out of repair, as to let in the rain when it fell at all heavily. The yard was empty, with the exception only of a few goats, and the geese aforesaid, and some common-looking poultry. The manure was scattered about, and seemed to be thought little of. I was accompanied in this survey by the owner, Terry Sweeny, whom I should have described before, as a "dark, frieze-coated, hoarse" man, who moreover was tall, and for his age extremely active. There was little to amuse or instruct in his arrangements; and though lovely sites abounded in the neighbourhood, there was no beauty in the locality he had chosen, for his dwelling stood close upon a deep red bog, through which sluggishly flowed a stream strongly impregnated with iron. He had eight milch cows, twenty-six heifers, thirty sheep and lambs, and a large flock of goats, all of which were fed upon the wild hills around. The man seemed, however, to thrive in spite of himself. It was manifest that Nature did every thing for him, and that he never exerted himself beyond the supply of his immediate wants. His wife, a thin, intelligent-looking, delicate woman, seemed bowed down with anxiety and fatigue. They had all been down in the "faver," Sweeny said; but it pleased the Almighty not to afflict him till the others were recovered, so that they had a chance of being looked

after. Though he lived many a long mile from his landlord, "the blessing of God rest upon him," yet he sent them all they wanted, and more too, over the mountains; and when the "faver was gone, and they all were left weak and sickly, my Lady sent them the port wine and the jelly, and so only three died among them all, God rest their souls." Much as it is the fashion to run down the landlords of Ireland, and to dilate upon their indifference to the sufferings of their poorer neighbours, I have heard of too many exceptions to allow this imputation to be made the rule. There is a great amount of social kindness, as well as hospitality, among high and low. But quiet benevolence is generally its own reward: it may be felt and appreciated by the objects, but it is too often unknown to the public; whereas Rumour's brazen trumpet is sounded loud and clear wherever injury or injustice is inflicted.

The sun was verging towards the west as we left Sweeny's farm, and we soon entered upon a wild ravine among the hills, and the road became a mere mountain track. On our left, a branch of the Owenduff River rushed along the valley, now circling in dark deep eddies, now throwing itself over some opposing ledge of rock, or spreading in a broad sparkling current over a smooth bed of sand and gravel. Before us mountain rose above mountain, behind us the plains of Ballycroy and the far distant waters of the Atlantic were just visible. It required no small skill in the charioteer, and steadiness and strength in the horses, to win our way. Sometimes the track could only be distinguished by the faint marks of wheels on the turf; sometimes it dipped suddenly into some deep glen, and crossed the river at places so rough and so dangerous, as not to

deserve the name of fords. Still, every step was interesting and increased in beauty. The towering cliffs and vast boulders, which here and there almost filled the narrow pass, were covered with every description of lichen; the boggy patches displayed many varieties of moss, and the gale, or bog myrtle in great profusion, filled the air with its fragrance. We thus travelled on slowly, very slowly, until sunset. Often had we to stop and allow the horses a moment's breathing time; sometimes we walked gently along, not caring to trust ourselves in the carriage, which occasionally performed extraordinary feats in the air. At length, at the north-eastern termination of a wide opening in the hills, on a verdant bank rising gently from a small lough, and backed by an eminence of moderate elevation, a house was visible. It was low, with a long plain stone coloured front, and flanked on both sides by masses of evergreens and firs. "You now see our destination," said my friend, smiling. "I do not know which to admire most, your nerve, or your patience, in venturing thus far: I only hope it will be in my power to reward your perseverance. In that spot I have now lived nearly fifteen years, and, humble and remote as it is, I prefer it to the proudest mansion that England could produce. I have there escaped the many miseries that are inseparable from much admixture with the world, and the supposed inconveniences of my position I have scarcely felt." Skirting the southern shore of the lake, and rounding its eastern extremity, we drove rapidly along an excellent road to the house; and as we alighted, Mr. S—— shook me warmly by the hand, and welcomed me to "The Farm of Glenduff."

CHAP. XVII.

THE S—— FAMILY.— THE FARM.— THE WELL OF ST.
KIARAN.— THE ECHO HUNTER.

As the object of my correspondence is not so much to describe to you men and manners as simply to state facts practically interesting and useful, I will not enter into all the details of what proved to me a pleasant and improving visit. Suffice it to say, I found in Mrs. S—— a lady of refined manners and simple habits, devoted to her duties as a wife and mother. She was always cheerful, never boisterous, and the arrangements of her household were conducted without any appearance of noise or bustle. The furniture was plain, but handsome and substantial; the floors, laid with polished bog-wood, needed no carpets in summer; and shining brass dogs, on which the black turf was piled, took the place of the more modern grate. In this, perhaps the remotest and wildest part of Ireland, all was English in arrangement and appearance. Cleanliness and plenty went hand in hand; dirt and extravagance found no entrance there. One English and two Irish girls, under the immediate superintendence of their mistress, formed the in-door establishment; and I was not a little pleased to notice that bare feet and bare legs were not tolerated. It was also delightful to observe the unaffected kindness of manner, and the anxiety to render every little

possible service, that pervaded all the inmates of this house. Selfishness was unknown where the greatest pleasure of each was to oblige. I never felt so entirely convinced of the often disputed truth, that retirement is the best soil in which to foster and mature the kindlier qualities of our nature. Contact with the world call into activity passions which else had been dormant; the universal selfishness around us teaches us to be selfish, suspicion engenders suspicion, wrong invites wrong, and vice allures to be vicious.

The out-door establishment at Glenduff was extensive. Mr. S—— gave all orders, and every thing about the farm was under his entire superintendence. But as he was obliged often to be absent at markets and attending sales, he had under him a young man of about five and twenty, whom he had taken from an orphan seminary when about ten years old, and since brought up in his own regular and business-like habits. To him was committed the carrying out of orders, and he had hitherto proved himself a devoted and faithful servant. He was every where, and in every thing; his quick eye seemed to embrace every operation at a glance; and he conducted the matters entrusted to him with such a quiet but cheerful zeal, that it was manifest his pleasure was in his duties. Besides this man, whose name was Richard O'Malley, were a principal herdsman and shepherd, the former having two, the latter three lads under him. Two or three cottiers also resided up among the hills, and to them was entrusted the keeping of the herds and flocks within bounds, when the others were engaged in various duties nearer home. A ploughman, having a stout boy as assistant, lived adjoining the farm-yard, and his wife managed the dairy, with the excep-

tion of two cows which were specially retained for the supply of the house, and which were under the charge of the English girl. The abovementioned Richard, the herdsman, and three of the boys, lived together in a commodious and well regulated building close to the house, and on Sundays and holidays they were admitted to dine there in a spacious room, which at other times was devoted to the general business of the establishment. Here was the hall of audience, and the great depository of rods, panniers, and tackle, with sundry guns and rifles, traps, and nets of every description. The morning after my arrival my host took me to inspect his farm-buildings. They were well planned, large, and substantial; consisting of two barns, ample cattle sheds well sheltered, a cow-house, on the English plan, and, what much pleased me, a considerable water-power, applied to every necessary operation of grinding, crushing, cutting, &c. This stream he had diverted from a hollow in the hill behind; and taking its rise from a small lough, it never failed in the requisite quantity, though used plentifully both in the farm and house for all common purposes. After dinner, which was at two o'clock, I strolled down to the lake with a rod; and Richard having selected a few flies for my use, I returned to tea with a very respectable show of trout in my pannier. A soft breeze blew from the west, and the ripple on the water was propitious. The largest trout weighed over two pounds and a half. In the evening Mrs. S—— invited us to accompany her to the Well of Saint Kieran, situated in a little glen on the south side of the lake; and the children were to be of the party, with Richard in attendance. As we walked gently along I took my station by the side of Mrs. S——, while her husband, obeying the impatient eager-

ness of the juniors, proceeded more rapidly in advance. "The happy trio before us," said I, "form all your family, I suppose?" "Oh, no," she replied, "we have three other children. Our eldest daughter is in England with my friends, and our second son is at school near Dublin, preparatory to his entering Trinity College. He is a great loss both to his father and to me, but we thought it necessary that he should mingle a little with the world before settling down here. It was, however, far from his own wish." "And your eldest son?" questioned I, doubtingly. "He has been a great cause of anxiety to us; but we must not repine, the others are all so good and promising." A sudden expression of pain passed for a moment over the generally composed countenance of Mrs. S——, and we walked on for some time in silence. And even so, I suppose, it must always be:

"Medio de fonte leporum

Surgit amari aliquid."

Turning abruptly round the corner of a rock, we left the road, and followed the merry windings of a limpid stream, along the bottom of a glen, shut in by rocks and perpendicular banks. The path, sometimes ascending, sometimes descending to the very margin of the brook, was overhung with hazels, willows, and hollies; while here and there a tall mass of alders rose from some mossy and green patch, the shadows of its leaves and branches quivering on the spreading surface of the water. The children, well acquainted with the place, hurried forward; and already did we hear their voices above us, when, looking onwards, a cliff, exhibiting on its time-worn surface every variety of lichen, seemed to

bar all further progress. Its surface was even, excepting a few fissures, whence hung beautiful masses of fern, and in the recesses of which grew the lovely green and jimped tufts of the *Saxifraga umbrosa*, or London pride. As we approached, the secret of egress became apparent. On the left the little stream, whose course we had followed hitherto, was seen tumbling down several smooth ledges of rock, alongside of which an ascent was gained by a narrow flight of rude steps conducting us to a natural platform, where the rest of the party were now assembled, willing to enjoy my surprise. And surprised indeed I was, as well as delighted. Here, oozing clear and plentiful from beneath a large moss-covered stone, was the spring, that just when it seemed about to sparkle in the broad daylight fell into a small natural basin, and a few yards further precipitated itself, as before described, into the glen below. Beautiful mosses fringed its sides, among which rose several specimens of the delicate *Lobelia Dortmanna*, with its usual companion the *Eriocaulon septangulare*. The rock formed a commodious seat; and beneath our feet was spread a carpet of the trailing arbutus, its bright red berries intermixed with the fine-leaved heath (*Erica cinerea*) and the feather moss, so abundant near the mountain springs and brooks. The basket of refreshments was produced, and a merry pic-nic indeed it was. Finer children I have seldom seen. The eldest boy present, Frank, is a manly strong-built fellow, about ten years of age. His countenance is free and open, and there is a good-tempered daring about him very attractive. He has a full flow of animal spirits, and is regarded with manifest admiration and deference by his sister, a fair blue-eyed Saxon maid between eight and

nine, whose large soft eyes, regular features, and luxuriant hair, give the promise of maturer beauty. The youngest boy, Edwin, differed much from either, being in general of a quiet and sedate disposition. At present, however, all was exhilaration and enjoyment; and as soon as they had done their part in clearing the basket of its contents, they carried it off, and, escorted by Richard, climbed the mountain in search of bilberries. Their departure afforded us an opportunity for conversation, though truly the contemplation of the scene itself was enough to fill the mind. Far below us, its surface still as glass, lay the little lough, here and there fringed with tall reeds or dipping willows. Beyond was the farm of Glenduff, with its mass of buildings, its plantations of evergreens, and the blue spiral smoke ascending from its chimneys against the bare face of the rocky hill behind. How peaceful it looked! the well-fenced cultivated lands around it marking it as the abode of careful industry; a conviction rendered yet more complete by the lowing of the cattle as they lazily ascended the green bank, and the wild gambols of the kids lingering behind the flock of goats who were now being driven to the fold. "And this, Mr. S——," said I, breaking the silence we had for some time maintained, "this is all your own creation, and in the short period of fourteen years?" "You may say in less than that period," replied my new friend. "It was several years after my taking possession of this wilderness before I was enabled to do much. My capital was nearly exhausted in the purchase of the farm and the building of the house; and you must be aware that both could now be accomplished at one third less at least than I then laid out upon them. In this respect the new set-

tlers have much the advantage. The circumstance that brought me here, though it may provoke a smile, is worth relating:—I was at Ballina, on my way into Donegal, where it was my original intention to settle. In the evening of a sultry day I was sitting at the open window of the inn, when the melodious sounds of a bugle, playing a beautiful Irish air, attracted my attention. Nothing could be finer, and in the then state of my spirits more affecting; but it soon ceased, and I sat motionless, full of those sad and melancholy feelings which such music will call forth. No long time had elapsed when a little dapper-looking gentleman, of middle age, entered the room, with a bugle in his hand. ‘I have to thank you, sir, I presume,’ said I, rising and bowing, ‘for the great treat I have just enjoyed?’ ‘You have to thank me for very little, sir,’ replied he, carelessly; ‘but if you are really fond of this kind of music, it may be in my power to give you some gratification. This instrument,’ continued he, ‘is all very well, but I seldom use it except to awake a finer music still.’ I stared, for I did not at first quite comprehend him. ‘Sir,’ continued he, ‘I use this bugle to awaken Dame Nature, whom you will find sleeping among the crags and cliffs. The moment I sound my bugle, an answer comes from the mountains, no less singular than it is beautiful, leaping from rock to rock, now loud, now murmuring, but always sweet, till it dies away in echoes low and fine as the gentlest wailings of an infant.”

“‘Excuse my dulness,’ said I, smiling; ‘I understand you now; you mean the echo.’

“‘Why yes,’ he replied, ‘echo, according to the common language of the world; I call them the voice

of awakened Nature. There is nothing in the theory of sound that can satisfactorily account to me for the wonderful voices my bugle has awakened in certain spots which I have discovered; but I do not make them generally known, for—laugh if you will—I have a notion, which I like to encourage, that Nature loves solitude, and would ill brook the being disturbed by every common idler. I have travelled through and through Ireland, meeting with such echoes in many a sequestered nook, unnoticed by any one before me, and the result with me is this:—Donegal exceeds even Kerry in one particular spot—Kerry exceeds Clare—but Ballycroy, yes, sir, not twelve miles from hence—Ballycroy exceeds them all.’

“By way of epilogue to this strange tirade, he put the bugle to his lips, and played rapidly, but in lower notes than I conceived the instrument capable of, a very lively Scotch air, in the style of Neil Gow, proving himself a perfect master of the art.

“‘Well,’ thought I, ‘we are all slightly mad upon some points, or there is no truth in old saws, and my new friend is evidently not exempt from so general a law of nature. But he is evidently a man of talent and information, and it shall not be my fault if I do not profit by his acquaintance.’

“Accordingly I drew him out to the utmost of my power, and was well rewarded. There was not any part of Ireland, Scotland, or Wales with which he was not familiar. He had visited Switzerland, too, but the mountains and valleys there, he said, were on too vast a scale for his purpose. In Merionethshire and Snowdonia, and other parts of North Wales, he had been very successful, as also in the western Highlands of

Scotland; but it was in the wilder districts of Connaught and Munster that he most delighted. In Glen Inagh, not far from the head of Kylemore lake, at the foot of Mulrea mountain, near the Killeries on the western side of Croagh Patrick, and in Ballycroy, near the lake of Carreg-a-biniogh, and in a spot between Corselieve and Nephin Beg mountains, he had awakened, he said, responses that might almost be thought superhuman: the valleys and cliffs seemed to start into life, and their voices were lifted up as if they were living things. 'But,' said he, lowering his voice, 'it were vain for you or any other mortal to attempt to find out these peculiar spots. I alone discovered them, and with me the knowledge of their existence will die. As no living man has the powers of invitation that I possess, so is it vain to expect from Nature a similar response. It cannot be.' I readily assented to this assertion, being, of course, quite convinced that the response of the echo must be more or less wonderful according to the skill of the musician. My companion was in all respects a gentleman, was a first-rate judge of the laws of harmony, knew the merits and demerits of all the principal composers and artists of the day, intermingled many interesting anecdotes with his disquisitions, and criticised with taste and learning. Ere we parted for the night, he invited me to accompany him on the following morning on an excursion into the Ballycroy mountains; and it was in this valley, not very far from the spot in which we are now sitting, that he gave me a specimen of his powers of 'awakening the voice of Nature.' He placed me on a certain spot; and exacting a promise that I would not follow him, he retired, and in about a quarter of an hour gave me such a treat in his peculiar art as

I can never forget. To describe it is impossible. No band of instrumental music in the world could equal it. The reverberations were perfectly astounding. The rocks and mountains seemed alive with the soul of harmony; the softest and wildest notes floated on the air, now close, now distant; now dying away in some distant recess of the valley, now awakening louder and louder among the cliffs and precipices; at one moment faint as the whisper of the breeze, at another loud, clear, and bold as the trumpet of the Archangel. But," continued Mr. S——, smiling, "I dare say by this time you think me as enthusiastic as my friend. Certainly I never before or since have experienced the sensations which at that time overpowered me, and I no longer either smiled or wondered at the zeal of my new acquaintance in his peculiar and eccentric pursuit. I never saw him afterwards but once, nor could I ever discover the exact spot from whence this astonishing echo could be produced. That it is within a quarter of a mile of this spot I am convinced; and when I last caught sight of him, he was leaning pensively against the rock, round whose base we turn on entering the glen below us. Our greeting was short. He congratulated me upon my improvements, but declared significantly that 'Art would drive out Nature.' 'This,' he said, 'is my last visit to this valley; it was once a favourite spot of mine, but the presence of man has tainted it. In Corranabinna I am safe from intrusion. There man will never pitch his tent; it is too near the sky; and let me tell you, sir, Nature speaks there in a language that even these rocks could never equal.' I could not prevail upon him to accept the rude hospitalities of my cottage, and after we had parted about ten minutes, a

few discordant notes of his bugle awakened a thousand more discordant echoes, and I never saw him more ! At the time of my first visit here, this townland was on sale. It did not then possess one cultivated acre ; but I admired the seclusion, and saw the capabilities of the land. I purchased it, therefore, and have never repented my bargain. At first I had great difficulties to encounter from want of means, for at that period Government advanced no money for improvements. From no one did I receive aid or encouragement ; yet, with every thing thus against me, I have not only cleared my way, but, by the blessing of Providence, I have created a valuable property out of a wilderness, and can leave my children independent of the world."

There was much in this story to affect as well to encourage, and it was some time before any of us felt inclined to break silence. As I looked upon the lovely scene before me, the comfortable retreat, the cultivated lands around, the pastoral wealth, I felt a strong conviction of my own success in a similar experiment, and the rather as I should make the attempt under much more favourable auspices.

CHAP. XVIII.

MODES OF RECLAMATION. — ERRIS. — ADVANTAGES OF IRELAND OVER ENGLAND FOR THE AGRICULTURIST.

As I have now resided for a week at the farm of Glenduff, having been for the whole of that time the constant companion of my worthy host in his walks around the domain, and a quiet but eager observer of all his operations, I can send you more positive data as to the means of ensuring success in an emigration to these parts. Every thing, indeed, I have hitherto seen is more than encouraging; it points to certainty where there is prudence and some capital. Mr. S—— has now 140 acres of land under the plough. He has made it a point to reclaim for this special purpose ten acres every year. His operations, however, as regard pasture and meadow are on a far more extensive scale, but are conducted irregularly, the amount of reclamation depending upon the nature of the surface, the demand for stock, the state of the labour market, &c. &c. A mountain rising gently south-eastward from the valley, and about a mile from the house, is the scene of his present operations. The slopes at the base of this mountain and the flat of the valley below were all bog. Some portion has been successfully reclaimed, and the rest is in progress, but slowly now, in consequence of the great depreciation of prices. The operation is altogether simple, involving

no extraordinary application of engineering science. The bog being originally formed, and its increase promoted, by the oozing of the mountain springs above, the first step is to cut off this supply of moisture, and lay the lands below comparatively dry. This is done by means of a catchwater drain, which must be made at the upper side of the bog-field, on the edge just between bog and mountain. The depth of this drain will of course depend on the soil, but it must be sunk, if possible, into the substratum, and so prepared that, if there be water sufficient, it may act as an intercepting drain for the purpose of irrigation. I observed that the effect of this one operation was almost immediate. The surface of the bog became generally firmer, and on the higher portion fresh grasses made their appearance. The next step is the division of such portion of the bog as is to be at once reclaimed, into ridges, at the distance of one or even two perches asunder according to the nature of the ground. Between each of these a small furrow must be taken out with the spade about a foot wide and a foot deep; and, if necessary, water furrows of the same size may be occasionally cut obliquely across the ridges to assist the discharge of the surface-water. This done, wait one year at least. The surface of the bog will continue to increase in firmness, rendering the future operations more easy and practicable. It will now be necessary to lay out the fields. Some persons advise ten acres to each field, but Mr. S—— prefers five acres Irish, or even in some situations less. These are enclosed by two deep ditches, having a high, broad, compact bank betwixt, and these ditches act also as open main drains. Upon these banks, though I did not see the plan acted upon at Glenduff, cuttings of the

common sallow (*S. caprea*), or of the spreading willow (*Salix aquatica*), would thrive, and at once give shelter and ornament to the lands. As soon as the bog by these means becomes capable of bearing the pressure, the ridges should be dug up and formed, all inequalities levelled, and holes filled up, and on the firmer parts paths may be made and gravelled, so as to allow a horse to work, either in harrowing with the help of a long splinter bar, or in carrying the requisite dressing upon the land, whether it be clay-lime, sea manure, marl, shells, or coral sand. One very important process too I observed also: where manure is difficult to come at, it may be much increased in quality without deterioration in quality, by admixture a few weeks before with turf or other vegetable matter. As the pulverisation of the soil is the great object, potatoes as a first crop are decidedly best, supposing of course that the present disease in that useful vegetable arises from mere temporary causes. The beds are formed across the intended ridges, the plants are earthed over with the stuff taken from the trenches, the manure being buried with the plant. Careful hoeing and subsequent digging out of the crop will have the best effect in reducing the vegetable texture into mould, and in the following year the ridges may be permanently formed, drains made where wanted, the necessary top dressing applied, and the bog sown with oats or even wheat harrowed in by horses or men.* This was the general principle of Mr. S——'s operations; but they varied of course according to the nature of the soil and peculiarities of situation. On the western side of the lough, for instance, one tract of fifty Irish acres

* Vide Fourth Report of the Commissioners on the Nature and Extent of the Bogs in Ireland.

had been regularly drained. The springs were not from above, but in the bog itself; no catchwater drain, therefore, was necessary. The first step was to open one large main eighteen feet across, sloping at about three inches to one foot to a bottom of two feet wide. This varied in depth from four feet to eight in order to give a fall, the ground there being flat. Into this main all the other drains emptied themselves, there being one drain to every two perches, or forty-two feet from drain to drain. This mode of draining costs on an average about thirty-three shillings per Irish acre. It may be as well to remark *en passant* that in round numbers fifty English acres make thirty Irish. The ground where the above improvements were effected was one half sloping, the other flat. At present the drains have not been filled in, but are left open to settle and empty themselves. Already there is no part on which there is any difficulty in walking, but the slope manifests a complete change. The coarser grasses, sedges, and weeds are disappearing, and without any manuring it is rapidly changing into really useful and valuable pasture. The lower portion, much of which is red bog, is not at present so promising, but as it is intended to reclaim this for arable land, it will next spring be pared and burned, then sown with rape, or manured with sea-weed for potatoes, afterwards well dressed with clay and manured, and sown with oats, clover to follow, then wheat. It is perfectly absurd, Mr. S—— says, to assert that red bog is incapable of remunerative cultivation. He showed me several fields on which good crops of barley, oats, turnips, and mangel were growing, and which had only been in cultivation about five years. Once reclaimed, these lands should *never be neglected*, continual working and fresh

dressings of clay or marl for a few years persisted in will make them productive, and will create a rich and permanent soil. Indeed, it is a fact attested by the experience of agriculturists of all times and all places, that vegetable matter once decomposed and reduced into mould produces the finest and most varied crops. Had these districts been similar in quality and surface to those we know in England under the general title of moorlands and wastes, it would be vain for the farmer to seek a profitable settlement here; but the case is exactly the reverse. Wastes in England are generally sandy or gravelly soils, hungry and repulsive to vegetation; whereas in the west of Ireland most of the uncultivated bogs and the alluvial soils on the banks of the rivers afford, by proper treatment in their reclamation, a source of *certain profit*. With regard to the farm of Glenduff, I have no hesitation in asserting, that the annual value, if let two years ago, would have equalled the price paid originally for the fee simple. All depends on the caution and judgment of the purchaser. There are large tracts of land in the west of Ireland which it would be absurd to purchase at any price; for instance, those overspread with huge boulders of granite, and those rocky plains where it would be difficult to find two or three acres in any one spot on which a plough could work; but, on the other hand, there are districts comprehending many thousands of acres, where every square yard has its value, and where lands may be purchased and farms rented for a price lower far than even colonial agents would ever dream of.* A great

* In the wretched colony of Natal the settlers give 1*l*. 5*s*. per acre for their land, and in other distant settlements much more. Good reclaimable land may be had in the western districts of Ireland for less money.

portion of western Mayo comes under this description, and I would above all others particularise Erris, which contains a most improvable superficies of many thousand acres. As a settlement, the west of Ireland presents advantages unknown to other districts which ignorant men are running after and colonising. The expences of reclaiming land in any of our colonies are greater than in Ireland; wages are higher, labourers scarcely to be had at any price; houses are let at high rents, markets are uncertain, carriage of produce expensive and difficult, morals are at a low ebb; there is no security against the aborigines, a man's life and property being in continual jeopardy for years. Witness New Zealand, Northern Australia, and the settlements north of the Cape. Whereas in the northern districts of the west of Ireland offences against the law are rare; the cowardly outrages of Tipperary are unknown, a numerous and hardy population wait to be employed, and regard the employer as their greatest benefactor. The roads are good, the harbours deep and well sheltered, the country beautiful and fertile, and there is a ready market for stock and for every description of produce. "I have travelled over most of Europe," said Mr. S—— to me one evening as we took our accustomed walk, "and, with the exception perhaps of certain tracts in Spain, I have seen no land of promise equal to the one I inhabit. Indeed, taking the county of Mayo as a whole, I give it the preference to any other in the west." I shall soon have an opportunity of confirming or refuting these opinions, to a certain extent at least, for I intend visiting Sligo and Donegal. In the meanwhile all I can say is, that Mr. S—— is an intelligent and experienced farmer, and one to whose opinion I attach

the greatest weight; but as he is exceedingly partial to his own locality, it is not impossible that this feeling may in a slight degree give its own colouring to his judgment.

Wages are low in the west. The labourers are well satisfied with sixpence or eightpence per day *in money*; but even this, till English capital was advanced for public works, was not always to be had. Mr. Alexander Nimmo, the engineer, was a most strenuous advocate for this act of justice to the people. While the supplies lasted, each man had his wages *in money*, and when hard work was to be done, a proportionate price was paid. So said my host, who knew Mr. Nimmo well. The set prices of labour by job or measure are very moderate, and the work I saw was well done. The wide and deep main drains cost from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d. per perch of seven yards, stone drains 5d., pipe drains 3½d. per perch. A boat load of sea-weed for manure, say three tons, will be cut and loaded for 20d. The deep ditches and banks I have before mentioned are from 1s. to 1s. 4d. per perch. On the plains of Ballycroy two cargoes of lime, ten tons each, will cost 14s.; and forty barrels of caustic lime may be procured out of one ton of the natural stone. The loss in burning is nearly fifty per cent. A common kiln holds about three tons, and this is broken and burned for 6s. On the red bog the caustic lime acts admirably in destroying the fibrous spongy particles, and reducing it into mould; and where the predominating rock is mica-slate, its effects are truly wonderful. The detritus of this rock, as before remarked, is generally fertile. It prevails altogether on the Nephin Mountains, on the northern portion of Currawn, on Achill, and the whole of the Ballycroy dis-

trict, particularly on the banks of its numerous streams, washed down from the surrounding cliffs and slopes. On the shores of Blacksod Bay are inexhaustible banks of sea coral. Some of the proprietors have a kind of float from twenty to twenty-five tons burden, for the purpose of conveying this excellent manure into the interior by means of the creeks and estuaries that abound on this coast. Six men are required for the work, and most amply does it repay the labour. About three cart-loads are spread over an acre, and this dressing is found equally efficacious but more lasting than the caustic lime. Mr. S—— has a high opinion of the coral sand, and he ~~lives~~ in hopes that a species of cheap railway may be laid across the plain so as to bring up this manure as well as sea-weed into the mountain farms. It would much assist the lime, which with farm-yard manure is at present the only principal dressing they can procure. A firm road from Doona over the plain towards the foot of Nephin Beg, and through the mountain gorge of Maumaratta, to join the road recommended by Mr. R. Griffith from Newport to Belmullet through the valley of Shrahmore, would be of infinite importance to that fertile but hitherto neglected district. A branch also would be desirable from the Bridge of Bellaveeny, skirting the townlands of Bellagarvaun, Shrahduggane, and Lurrigandarreg, and meeting the Doona road near Scardaun. *Thirty thousand acres at least* of highly improvable land would thus be at once thrown into the market, offering as sure and profitable an investment for capital and skill as can be found in Ireland. Peat-charcoal as a manure for turnips is rapidly coming into use, but I doubt whether with much success. It is greatly improved, however, by an admixture of

guano in the proportion of six bushels of guano to twenty-four bushels of ashes per acre. I saw some good turnips produced on the bog the third year of its reclamation, by drilling in the seed upon this preparation. But one of the greatest advantages that Ireland possesses is in its inexhaustible fields of fuel. Some of the turf is, in my opinion, almost equal to the best coal. In the district westward of Lough Corrib is a tract of deep bog unrivalled for its excellence. However poor the cottier may be, he can always provide a good fire for his family, though it is certainly to be wished that they were not so fond of the smoke. They seem, however, to delight in an atmosphere that would kill a Saxon in a week; and I verily believe that many, who have chimneys sufficiently capacious, purposely contract them at the top lest an undue proportion of this luxurious gas should escape. The cutting and preparing of this fuel is a source of considerable employment to the labouring poor. The price of cutting, spreading, and drying a portion twenty yards long, three feet wide and four turves deep, is 7*d.*, damping 6*d.* Fifty such portions, at 13*d.* each, will supply a family liberally for twelve months.

Ireland is very moderately taxed,—not, however, that she could bear more than has been already put upon her: tithe, cess, and poor's-rates form the principal of the outgoings on land, exclusive of labour. The tithe, as far as I could judge from the inquiries I was enabled to make, is below the English average. The rate for the relief of the poor (a most merciful and necessary measure) has not generally in Mayo, I believe, exceeded 5*s.* 10*d.* in the pound; but then the poor-law valuation is very much under the real value. Next year a de-

crease to 3*s.* is expected. Should English capital be brought in to any extent, the rates, I am convinced, would soon be the merest trifle. Upon my English property the taxation, or rather the outgoings, are fearful: before I can look either for interest upon the capital employed, or profit from my exertions, I have nearly 12*s.* per acre to pay in outgoings of various kinds. These consist of fines and quit-rents to the lord of the manor, road-rates, church-rates, poor's-rates, county rates, land-tax, income and property tax, assessed taxes; and, though last not least, from 5*s.* to 7*s.* per acre by the tithe composition, which, being calculated on averages, will for some years press most heavily upon the already overwhelmed agriculturist. Add to these the many calls upon private charity, the public subscriptions, which a man cannot put aside without odium, the relatively high scale of wages, which nevertheless ought not to be reduced, the continual wear and tear of implements, the long blacksmiths' bills, and the various perquisites to servants and labourers, which, allowed in more prosperous days, cannot now be discontinued without murmurs and dissatisfaction. From the greater portion of this ruinous pressure Ireland is free, while her labour is fifty per cent cheaper, and her soil equally, if not more, fertile.

" O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,
Agricolae !"

CHAP. XIX.

SITE OF A NEW CHURCH. — THE SOUND. — ACHILL.

IN nothing, perhaps, has Ireland more improved, during the last ten years, than in stock; and indeed, considering the extreme fertility of her pasture and meadow lands, it is only to be wondered at that she remained so backward in this respect for so many centuries. Those who have once seen the coarse, vulgar, gaunt animal called a pig, which Ireland used to send forth, will never forget it: the ridgy back, the flat sides, the long legs, the ears like those of an elephant, the head that of a crocodile: it was, in fact, the very personification of all that was hideous and disgusting. These are now rare, and, where found, are a disgrace to the owner. The Berkshire pure, or crossed with the Chinese, or other finer breeds, seem now the favourites; but many others of the best kinds prevail: and I should say, travelling along the roads, and observing this stock, that Ireland is in no way inferior to England.

The weather being delightful and apparently settled, I agreed to accompany my friend on another visit to Achill, whither he was going to examine some cattle, which had been offered for immediate sale. We proceeded through Bangor to the Tullaghan ferry, after crossing which we threaded the wilds of Ballycroy, passing Shrahnamanragh and Lettra, the stations where

Messrs. Davison and Amber are carrying on their extensive improvements. I observed the crops on the newly-reclaimed lands to be looking well; but the oats appeared to be ripening unevenly, some being ready for the sickle, while others were yet green. Looking back upon Shrahnamanragh, as we passed over the hill to the south, it was delightful and cheering to see the banks of the noble Owenduff river smiling with yellow corn, all ripe for the sickle, and to find lands which, a few years ago, were almost impassable wastes, now rendering a grateful return to the labour of man. As I looked upon this scene with the deepest interest, figuring to myself what a marvellous change ere long must pass over the whole of these extensive wilds, I could not help thinking how much better money could be employed here, than in those absurd and lying speculations which have wrought such mischief to England, and reduced such multitudes of dupes to absolute ruin. Even in my own quiet neighbourhood I have witnessed too many instances of this mania; and I much doubt if the country at large will recover from the effects of it in the present generation. We may hope, however, that the pecuniary abundance of the present hour will now find a better outlet; and that while we are sending our accumulating hordes of wealth and the flower of our population to enrich other, and often antagonist lands, we shall not forget that there is a lovely island near us, blessed with every natural advantage, which now lies neglected, her hardy and patient population unemployed, her resources undeveloped, her poor thronging the workhouses, or dragging along a hopeless existence in hovels unfit for the lairs of wild beasts. Surely the policy, if not the philanthropy, of England will speedily remedy all this.

Ireland is a disgrace to us in the face of the whole world; and though it were vain to deny that there are certain serious impediments to her social improvement, yet these might be removed by a wise and *determined* government. If private party views could only give way to a liberal and enlightened patriotism, so that those objects might be carried out which reason shows to be indispensable, Ireland would, in a few years, rank in prosperity, industry, and loyalty with the sister island. Often as I have had occasion to give utterance to these, or similar sentiments, I cannot help repeating them; they are forced from me by all I see or hear at every moment of my progress, and there is, besides, this valid excuse, if I should appear to insist too long and too frequently upon the ~~same~~ topics; the prejudices of Englishmen are so rooted in regard to Ireland, that it requires no little iteration to obtain anything like a fair hearing: it is only by pointing out their errors over and over again that they can be induced to believe in the possibility of them, or indeed, that they can be persuaded to exercise their judgment at all upon the matter; they believe only because they have believed, the mind always clinging, with wonderful tenacity, to old opinions.

Continuing our journey, we arrived at the site of a new church, which is about to be founded amid these wilds, when we alighted from the carriage to examine the ground more closely. I have ever been accustomed to maintain how delightful it is to worship the Almighty Creator of the Universe in that house which has the blue firmament for its ceiling, and the everlasting hills for its walls. At this moment I felt all the truth of this idea. The scene was similar to the one I have de-

scribed at Doona Castle, from which indeed, this spot is not far distant. Except where the Atlantic is opened to the westward over the lowlands of Doriell, the whole horizon is encircled by noble ranges of distant mountains. Nearer, gently undulating hills and vast uncultivated plains fill up the picture ; and there is thrown over all a primitive wildness which seems to indicate that this spot has undergone no changes, except those wrought by nature herself, since the time of the deluge. From hence I could command a view of the coast. The lands, that slope down from the interior towards the shores of Blacksod Bay, present every desirable agricultural feature. The vegetable accumulations are not deep ; the falls for draining are admirable ; many considerable patches of excellent pasture exhibit themselves wherever the land can discharge the surface water. In fact, I was so impressed with what I saw, that we walked over a considerable portion of it, and returned more and more surprised that such extensive and valuable tracts should still remain in a state of nature. On the sea-shore we observed large heaps of sea-weed thrown up by the tides, sufficient, indeed, to manure hundreds of acres, and it was evident, that but a small portion of intelligence, with moderate labour, were required, to make these lands as productive as any in the county. *Here was no speculation.* The outlay would be small ; the return certain. Nature supplied the land and its necessary appliances to boot ; and man was only required to put to use what Providence had so bounteously placed before him. These observations apply, in a greater or less degree, to the whole coast, stretching from Tullaghan Bay to the Sound of Achill, and, perhaps, a few miles further south. The lands around Doona, and the

adjoining townland of Doriell, are principally a sandy loam, capable of bearing any crops, but requiring constant cleaning. I saw good flax, and also wheat; but the barley and oats were excellent; and even at the present low prices, must prove remunerative. What these lands would produce under a good system of husbandry we may well conjecture; not only is there abundance of sea-weed, but the coral-sand is found in considerable quantities among the rocks; and as I have before remarked, lime is to be had at a low price.* We remained so long examining these lands that it became necessary for us to sleep at the Sound of Achill, and proceed to view the stock on the following day. It proved a pleasant excursion, though I had previously visited the island. The fact is, almost every day among these mountain regions produces variety of scenery according to the weather; but whether it be cloud or sunshine, to my eye, it is always interesting, often exquisitely beautiful, and sometimes sublime.

The cattle we went to inspect were on Croaghan Mountain, near to Keem. Mr. S. purchased thirty-eight of them, all fair stock and in good condition. Although this district is famed through Ireland for its superior mutton, yet we saw no sheep, and probably their numbers of late may have been much on the decline, in consequence of the inroads made upon them in the time of the late famine. During that inauspicious

* Since these pages were written, much of this district has changed hands, and the prognostications of the author are on the eve of fulfilment. Many desirable farms, however, are still to be let in Upper Erris and Tyrawley, and that excellent landlord and enterprising proprietor, Mr. C——, affords every facility and encouragement to those who settle on his extensive property.

period, as before mentioned, the poor classes, driven well nigh to desperation by hunger, laid violent hands upon the sheep wherever they could find them. The following morning we drove to the Bridge of Ballaveeny, where, committing the carriage to the care of a servant, we determined to make the best of our way on foot to Glenduff, through the mountains.

CHAP. XX.

NEGLECTED CAPABILITIES. — IRISH WASTE LAND SOCIETY. —
 MR. VERNON'S LODGE. — PASS OF LURREIGANE. — BIVOUAC.
 — ANCIENT ROAD. — BOG-TROTTERING.

So much had I been impressed with the capabilities of this district, the peculiarity of its scenery, and above all, by the excellent qualities of my new friend, that I determined to look out for a suitable settlement for myself in his neighbourhood. With this view, I proposed that we should traverse the mountains, and thus personally inspect their inmost recesses. Pursuing the course of the Owen-a-vrea river from the bridge, we soon attained an abrupt elevation in the midst of that vast plain which lies at the foot of the mountains, disclosing many thousand acres of improvable land, but now a cheerless waste. As we stood upon this eminence, the capabilities of profitable improvement immediately before us struck us both, and I detail them as one instance, among too many, how this fine country is neglected and unappreciated. The river here divides itself into several small branches. The banks for a considerable distance on these were of a deep alluvial soil, producing rich natural grasses, and manifestly capable, by a mere trifling outlay, of being transformed into good meadow or arable lands. I should say, that immediately around the spot on which we stood, there were at least two

hundred acres of this description. We also noticed that the principal branch of the river possessed considerable mill power, there being a gradual fall of at least thirty feet, with an abundant supply of water, at all times, for the use of machinery, however extensive. The ground, too, was pleasingly undulated, and by planting the abrupt sides of the eminences, and converting the little plains into meadows, a most desirable and profitable location would be at once created. And yet this spot — lovely even in its neglected state — presenting every requisite for a most flourishing settlement, and near, moreover, to a public road, is unappropriated, while thousands are crowding to the Antipodes at an immense expense of money, time, and toil, for the very inferior settlements they may acquire in those uninteresting, and too often, profitless regions! Proceeding along the plain, we found several situations where excellent farms might be squared out, presenting many of the same favourable features with the former; and we both agreed in thinking, that in the hands of even a moderate capitalist, this extensive district might be subdivided into various holdings, so as to bring, with a moderate outlay, a large return in rental. The system of subdividing large tracts of land into very small farms, as propounded by the late Colonel Robinson, and also acted upon by him as agent for the Irish Waste Land Company, has, unfortunately, proved a failure; the class of men thus created, it is now evident, cannot bear up against bad seasons or unfavourable legislation. Incapable, from want of capital, of doing anything for themselves, the whole devolves upon the landlord; he must build them “houses and out-buildings — find schools for their families — supplies of seeds and pro-

visions of good quality in periods of scarcity — mills at which to grind their corn and to dress their home-made woollens for clothing — timber for repairs — stores for securing their produce — piers for the protection of their vessels, if on the coast," * &c. &c. And what does he gain by all this? Rents, if very low, may be received for a year or two, but the first reverse scatters the benefits of this outlay to the winds; not only cannot rents be paid, but the poor people, so located, must be fed. Such has hitherto been the result of this system, which, however, we must, in justice say, was founded in the purest philanthropy, and might have been brought to a different result, had not the rents given for the land been absurdly high, and had not the potato visitation inflicted a blow which could not be expected, and therefore was not provided against. On the Gleneask estate, belonging to the Irish Waste Land Company, seventy tenants were thus located; all seemed to be going on well; but the potato blight came; the Company found themselves losers; the tenants were utterly ruined; the establishment was dissolved, and the accounts are now finally being wound up, after a large outlay in support of a system, thus proved, inapplicable to the present state of the country. It is well this experiment has been tried. Those who undertook it were real friends to Ireland, and if success had been possible, it would have attended their noble and devoted efforts.

It was mid-day ere we arrived at the shooting lodge, at present occupied by Mr. Vernon, which is situated on a small plain, near the junction of the Owenduff river, with one of its tributary streams, and surrounded

* See Practical Suggestions, by Colonel D. Robinson, 1846.

by magnificent mountains, which hitherto I had only seen at a distance. We paused on the summit of an abrupt bank, overhanging the smaller river, to contemplate the scene before and around us. Here the glowing fancy of the artist, or the keen eye of the sportsman, would find a rich treat. Before us was the romantic pass of Lurricane, running deep into the mountains, through which the Owenduff river was seen forcing its way, with many a bold sweep, and exhibiting ever and anon deep and placid pools, most tempting to the eye of the angler. On the right rose Cuscombe-curragh, from whose lofty top I had gazed upon these plains not long before, and half way up the mountain were seen those grand precipices which overhang the lovely and secluded lakes of Carreg-a-binnig and Corralough, which I have previously described. To the left were the crags of Gloré Slieve, and further eastward the lofty Nephin Beg overhanging the wild vale and pastoral district of Maumarrattah. Behind us, to the westward, was the vast plain we had been traversing, bounded by the hills of Currawn, and the lofty cone of Slievemore. The Lodge, and the two rivers murmuring by, formed a lovely foreground, relieving the vastness and solitariness of the scene. All around it was wild; and though the little plain on which it stood abounded in sweet and luxurious herbage, and would, if enclosed, have formed a beautiful as well as profitable precinct, yet all was as nature formed it, and it was manifest that the rod and the gun alone occupied the thoughts of its occupants.—A great barking of dogs announced our approach to this mountain-abode. We entered, and though Mr. Vernon was out shooting, yet “Ye are kindly welcome!” was duly said and acted upon by his

servant. The Lodge is substantially built, and consists merely of three rooms,—a kitchen, a sitting-room, and a bed-room adjoining, with two beds. A third bed, also, occupies a snug corner in the sitting-room aforesaid. We sat down to rest and refresh ourselves, for long as our walk had been we had a longer before us. All around wore the signs of rural sports. Guns, fishing-rods, gaffs, panniers, landing-nets, and other implements, were in abundance; instead of costly carpets, the floor was covered with the prepared skins of seals, badgers, and otters. In one corner, a handsome bitch, of the Scotch terrier breed, was suckling half a score of pups, whose early pugnacity gave earnest of future excellence. A fine old pointer, stretched at his length before the huge turf fire, completed the picture. A few newspapers, of somewhat ancient date, among them "Bell's Life," of course, and a dozen books of varied literature, occupied the window-shelf, on which also reposed a well used meerschaum. In every respect the spot was well chosen. The mountains were not so near as to impede the full glow of the sunshine; the scenery was cheerful in its grandeur, the rivers and lakes close by afforded some of the finest angling in Ireland, and the surrounding heathery slopes abounded with red grouse. Though little preserved, and plundered by eagles, hawks, and foxes, yet a good sportsman may easily bag his twenty brace in a morning's walk; in the immediate district surrounding the Lodge, the snipe-shooting is unrivalled; and it is no unusual thing for one gun to bag ten to fifteen couple of woodcocks. Otter-hunting, too, may be had in perfection, as these animals abound not only in the rivers and brooks, but also in every lough (and there are many) of this district. We could occasionally

make out their spraints or tracks as well as the rootings of the badger, as we walked their haunts. Leaving the Lodge, our road, or rather course, — for road or path there was none, — lay through the Pass of Lurricane. The beautiful river along which we now rambled presented the most inviting pools for the angler's skill; and could they relate their own history, would have many a strange tale to tell, both of success and failure. It is one thing to rise a salmon, and another to gaff him; yet perhaps, after all, the very uncertainty of the sport is one of its most favourable features. At all events, this "gentle craft," as it has been well called, possesses charms of its own, though hardly enough to satisfy the spirits of the young and ardent; it is quiet and contemplative, and is accompanied by the sweetest music upon earth, that of the flowing river. But above all, it has the advantage of affording amusement when age has disqualified us for rougher sports.

As we advanced up the Pass, every step increased the wild beauty of the scenery. "Gorge, lug, and corrie" succeeded each other in endless variety; many an eagle was seen soaring among his native cliffs, and many a grouse sprung almost from beneath our feet. The clouds in Ireland seem to me to produce more exquisite effects upon the landscape than elsewhere, either from its greater capability of receiving such impressions, or from some peculiarity in the atmosphere. As we paused for a few minutes on the summit of a rocky knoll, known as Lurricane Castle, though I could find no remains of any walls or agger, this was peculiarly the case. Goreslieve was to our left, dark and gloomy; the western slopes of Nephin Beg were radiant in the sun, while to our right the heights of Carreg-a-binnio

displayed the reflection of cloud coursing cloud along the rugged surface, and the deep hollows, in which reposed the lakes, seemed black as midnight. Over the plain, behind us, a dark storm was sweeping along from the Atlantic, and, in the same direction, a perfect rainbow formed a noble arch from Benmore to Bella-veeny. It was now deemed prudent to hasten for shelter from the coming storm; and we accordingly pushed forward, over most difficult and uneven ground, till we reached a small stream, which, having its source in the heights of Curranarty, far above us, leaped and danced gaily down the steep declivity, to join its tiny waters to the river below. Here under shelter of a rock, and reposing on beds of the thickest heather, mingled with moss and fern, we bivouacked for awhile, enjoying some well-seasoned Havannahs, and with modest sips of the "crather" diluted, not too much though, with

" Water from the little brook,
That o'er its flinty pavement sweetly sung."

The storm soon passed over, and again from the breaks in the dark clouds the rays of the sun began to dart upon the plain, the mountain, and the lake, forming striking, and sometimes almost unearthly combinations of light and shade. Indeed, a more peculiar scene than the one now before us I have rarely if ever met with. Below us was a fine plain, hemmed in north and south by pastoral mountains of no great elevation. To the east and west the pass formed a wide break, so that the sun from "morn to dewy eve" had admittance within this favoured recess. The Owenduff and one of its most considerable tributaries watered this plain with

their meanderings, the former descending from the mountains overhanging the distant valley of Shrahmore, and the latter visibly rushing down the precipitous sides of Nephin Beg, from the Lake of Scardaun. I could at the moment have fancied myself amid those lovely scenes of Asia Minor described by travellers. The eye of fancy speedily crowded this solitary plain with flocks and herds, perched on each rising knoll some quiet pastoral home, covered the rocky sides of the mountains with dark forests, or converted their sunny slopes into green pastures, or joyous fields of corn.

We were in the district known as Maumarattah. The river we had hitherto so much admired, now dwindled to an insignificant brook; but here were to be seen the gravelly bottoms on which the salmon love to spawn. A number of small lakes were scattered among the hills, and many a silvery thread-like streamlet might be seen stealing down the sides of the slopes, its course fringed with the brightest green. Here we gained an ancient road, which once connected Bangor and the northern parts of Erris with Newport, stretching from the sides of Nephin Beg southward, through Shrahmore, and along Lough Feough and the Furnace Lake in Burrishoole. But it must have been, indeed, a sure-footed steed that could have safely picked its way among the loose rocks and deep holes of this ancient route. It never could have been intended for carriages of any kind, but was probably one of those ancient tracks, known by the natives as the *ballagh gorrué*, bridle road. Nevertheless it is by far the best line to open out these valuable districts, and it reflects little credit upon the authorities of the county, that this internal communication should be so utterly neglected,

while all around scores of miles of useless road are passed and jobbed by interested parties. Indeed, throughout the whole of this highly available district, commencing with Bellaveeny, and ending in Shrahmore, a distance of ten miles at least, there is neither path nor yet road to be found, the one mentioned excepted; and this must have been impassable for half a century at least. It is, however, impossible that this necessary work should be much longer overlooked or delayed.

Bad as this ancient road was, we were not sorry to exchange the softer surface of the waste for its rugged, but more solid foundation. We had, indeed, already accomplished a great work, as those who may be induced to follow our footsteps will readily allow. Our course had generally been along the lower slopes of the mountains, which are soft and spongy in consequence of receiving the springs from above. High tufts of matted grass and dwarf heath, called tussocks, overspread the surface, and the necessity, for considerable distances, of springing from one of these to another, gave full and unusual play to every muscle and sinew. To miss your footing was, in general, no very agreeable matter. On one of these occasions, when I measured my length on the soft ground, "Wurra," said our guide, looking back, "and is it there you are? Och, murther," continued he, assisting me to rise, and to draw my left leg and arm out of a deep immersion in the bog, "sure, it's all black mud ye are. Oh, the blackguards o' the world, to think of the county cess, and no roads here, at all at all." My companions, however, did not escape scot free; for at the rapid pace at which we journeyed it was almost impossible to avoid casualties. We pursued the old road for some distance, but left it at the point where, running

over the elbow of a mountain, it descends into the fine and fertile vale of Shrahmore. Our course then lay to the left ; and skirting the uninteresting shores of Lough Avoher, which lies embosomed in a vale under the craggy heights of Letterkeen, we passed the smaller Lough Gaul ; and thus, having well examined the beauties and capabilities of this *terra incognita*, we seriously set our faces towards the farm of Glenduff. It was late in the evening when we arrived there, but the hearty and affectionate greeting that awaited us, and all the comforts at hand that genuine and simple-hearted hospitality could devise, soon made us forget the fatigues we had undergone, and I retired to rest more than ever convinced that Ireland was yet destined to be great, prosperous, and happy, if her people, under God's blessing, would only have it so.

CHAP. XXI.

COMMISSIONERS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF BOGS.—SIR H. DAVY'S
LETTER. — IRISH WASTE LAND COMPANY. — FARMERS'
ESTATE SOCIETY. — PROSPECTS OF IRELAND.

YOUR question as to what has hitherto been attempted in Ireland for the reclamation of waste lands, and the promotion of a good system of agriculture, is one which implies more research, and a more intimate acquaintance with localities than I can pretend to. From the commencement of the present century, many enlightened and patriotic individuals have endeavoured, both by example and precept, to show the way; but the wretched system of middlemen and subletting, offered an insuperable bar to all these private efforts. Often were the great capabilities of the sister country forced upon the attention of Government; but it was not till the year 1809 that Commissioners were appointed "to inquire into the nature and extent of the several bogs in Ireland, and the practicability of draining and cultivating them." The names of these commissioners, as appended to their first Report, were as follows:—Charles Vallancey, Richard Griffith, Henry Hamilton, J. Leslie Foster, William Gore. The entire expense of the establishment was to amount to 256*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* per annum. These commissioners, on the commencement of business, found "that a portion of Ireland, of little more

than one fourth of its entire superficial extent, and included between a line drawn from Wicklow Head to Galway, and another drawn from Howth Head to Sligo, comprises within it about six sevenths of the bogs in the island, exclusive of mere mountain bogs, and bogs of less extent than 500 acres, in its form resembling a broad belt drawn across the centre of Ireland, with its narrowest end nearest to the capital, and gradually extending in breadth as it approaches to the Western Ocean." They then divided all the bogs containing above 500 acres, in the counties of Kildare, King's County, Tipperary, Westmeath, and Longford, into seven districts; which were severally apportioned to the following engineers, who were desired to report thereon: — viz. Mr. Brassington, Mr. Edgeworth, Mr. Jones, Mr. R. Griffith, Mr. Aker, Mr. Longfield, and Mr. Townsend. The Reports of the Commissioners, founded on the information thus attained, as well as the separate Reports of the engineers themselves, were printed by order of the House of Commons. To any one interested in so vast a subject as the reclamation of one fourth of a large island from a state of mere waste and moor to a state of productive usefulness, beneficial equally to the owner and to the state, the perusal of these documents will afford unmingled gratification. It is therein as plainly laid down as it is incontestably *proved*, that bog land not only can be reclaimed at a small comparative cost, but that when properly treated it forms the richest of soils, and will maintain any description of produce suitable to the climate. "In comparing," say the Commissioners in their second Report, "the reports of our engineers with each other, we find, as might be expected, considerable difference of opinion as to the most eligible modes of

draining these bogs, and of reducing them to a state of cultivation. *They all however agree, not merely as to the perfect practicability in every instance of reclaiming them, but also that the measure would be attended with a very great degree of profit.*" I am not aware to what extent the Government acted upon the information thus obtained; certainly no extended system of operations was commenced, and it now remains for individuals to take advantage of the valuable suggestions thus prominently laid before them. My own observations and inquiries have fully borne out the statements made in those interesting reports, and in perusing them I was much pleased to discover a letter from that great authority Sir Humphry Davy to the Commissioners; and as I am not aware that it exists in any other work, I will transcribe his opinion, as one strongly corroborative of my own views upon the subject.

COPY.— *Appendix to Second Report, No. 9.*

" February 1. 1811.

" Sir,— As the Commissioners for considering the practicability of draining the bogs of Ireland have done me the honour of requesting my opinion on the important national object to which their attention is directed, I shall without apology beg leave to communicate to them, through your means, such observations as I have been able to make on the subject. Bogs, in general, are known to consist of inert vegetable matter, covered more or less with unproductive vegetables, and containing a large quantity of stagnant water. There are two causes why they are unfitted for cultivation.

One is the existence of stagnant moisture ; the other is the excess of inert vegetable matter. There is but one mode of removing the stagnant water, which belongs to the practical engineer, and that is by drainage. The different modes of effecting this have been so ably discussed in the Reports before the Commissioners, and which they were pleased to request me to peruse, that it would be presumptuous in me to offer any observations upon this part of the inquiry. The mode of removing the excess of inert vegetable matter, and of rendering it useful, is a subject which more immediately comes within the province of chemistry ; and on this I shall venture to offer some suggestions. Bogs differ very much in their composition. In general, 100 parts of dry peat contain from 60 to 99 parts of matter destructible by fire ; and the residuum consists of earths, usually of the same kind as the substratum of clay, marl, gravel, or rock on which they are found, and oxide of iron. Burning furnishes a simple mode of destroying the inert vegetable matter, and where the peat contains much earthy matter, tends to supply that which is necessary in every fertile soil, a due proportion of the earths. From the analysis of Mr. Griffiths, of several specimens of a particular bog, it appears, however, that this practice will not be universally applicable : for he found 1440 parts of several specimens of peat affording only from 12 to 50 parts of ashes ; the proportions being greatest in the lower strata. In cases where lime can be applied to the surface of bogs, there can be no doubt of its beneficial efficacy. If used in its state of quicklime, it not only destroys excess of vegetable matter, but forms a compost extremely favourable to the vegetation of esculent plants. The peat hills of

Derbyshire have many of them been rapidly brought into cultivation, by merely draining and scattering lime over the surface ; and treated in this way they admit, I believe, of being ploughed up the second year, and sown with oats, or planted with potatoes. *Any kind of soil will improve peat.* Sand, clay, or marl, must be all beneficial, because a great object is to increase the quantity of earth in proportion to the vegetable matter. If a peat is of a black colour, soft consistence, and contains living vegetables at the surface, it will probably be easy of improvement by liming, or the application of the earths. If it is an inert red peat, containing little decomposing vegetable matter, and having only moss at its surface, there is reason to conceive that attempts at improvement should be preceded by burning the surface. To render bogs arable lands capable of bearing white crops, there must be a certain quantity of earth added to the vegetable matter, or a certain quantity of vegetable matter destroyed ; but it appears probable that many bogs may be made into good pasture by draining, and sowing indigenous or foreign grasses, particularly if irrigation can be employed. In England, this practice has been particularly successful. At Priestley, near Woburn, and at Castle Acre, there are meadows which have been rapidly reclaimed from bog, and which produce luxuriant and excellent crops of grass in consequence of irrigation. The Commissioners will appreciate the value and importance of my excellent friend Dr. Richardson's ideas on the improvement of bogs, by cultivating on them the indigenous Irish grasses. From a comparison of the able reports of Messrs. Edgeworth and Griffiths, it appears evident that very different plans of cultivation must be adopted in different cases. The chemical com-

position of bogs, and the ashes they afford, differ exceedingly; as I have found in various experiments upon specimens of peat from different districts. The peat of the chalk counties of England contains much gypsum; but I have found very little in any specimens from Ireland or Scotland; and, in general, these peats contain very little saline matter. There are peculiar advantages, which will strike every one, in judging of the practicability of improving most of the great bogs in Ireland; the quantity of limestone and limestone gravel in the neighbouring districts, and the marl or clay which in so many cases forms the substratum of the bog. If the draining can be easily effected, if the upper stratum can by mechanical means be freed from its excess of water, there is no doubt that its cultivation might be rapidly effected. A few experiments upon the modes of improving these bogs, most unlike each other, would be, perhaps, the best preliminary step for laying the foundation for the great national undertaking. This would probably lead to particular plans for each particular district, which would be directed by a minute knowledge of the local circumstances, and by chemical analysis pointing out the particular nature of the peat. *A soil covered with peat is a soil not only covered with fuel, but likewise with manure.* It is the excess of manure only which is detrimental, and it is much more easy to destroy it than to create it. To cultivate a bog is a much less difficult task than to improve a sand. If there is a proper level to admit of draining, the larger the scale of operation, the less must the comparative expense be, because machinery may for many purposes take the place of manual labour, and the trials that have been already made by private individuals, and which are

stated in the different Reports, prove not only the feasibility of the general project, but afford strong grounds to believe, that any capital expended upon it, after mature and well digested plans, would in a very few years afford a great and increasing interest, and would contribute to the wealth, prosperity, and population of the island.

“ I have the honour to be, &c. &c.,

“ H. DAVY.”

Though the recommendations of the Commissioners had no effect in engaging Government in any grand national scheme of reclamation, yet the statements advanced by them, and the striking facts and calculations which they brought before the public, caused much individual exertion in that direction; and had it not been for the defective nature of Irish tenures, and the state of the law as affected property, the reclamation of waste lands would have made great progress: nearly half a century has thus been lost to the country; but now that the public mind is awake to Irish abuses, and the Government are fairly putting their shoulders to the wheel, it is to be hoped that the hitherto crushed energies of the country will arise and triumph over every obstacle. At various times companies of intelligent men, conscious of the advantages within their grasp, and anxious to show the way in the noble race of improvement, have combined together, and if encouraged, were willing to exhibit on a large scale what could be done. The same causes, however, which checked individual enterprise, damped their energies also; and it was not till the “ Irish Waste Land Improvement Society,” was instituted under the sanction and encouragement of

that true friend to Ireland, the Earl of Devon, that any serious step was taken to effect any great moral change in the condition of the people. We are informed by their Managing Director, Colonel Robinson, in his Report, dated 1843, that the purpose for which the Society was formed "was to construct works of a general character, such as roads, bridges, main drains, boundary fences, and such other works as are beyond the scope of the capital or skill of the tenantry, and by the facilities which they would afford to let or reclaim lands not otherwise available, securing simultaneously with those objects an adequate return for the Society's outlay." The education of the tenants and their families; the encouragement of temperance, industry, and cleanliness, the putting down "the injurious practice of subletting," and the discouragement of indiscriminate emigration, were also praiseworthy objects of this truly patriotic society. The advantages offered to tenants settling on the Company's lands were as follow :—" Moderate rents during the first years of occupancy. The example and instruction given to tenants by the stewards and model farms. Loans of timber and lime to enable the tenants to build their own cottages. Loans of seed, oats, potatoes, grass, and turnip seed, and wheat in the spring. Allowances and encouragements given for reclamation. Assistance in the construction of fences. Steady employment with fair wages throughout periods of agricultural distress. Leniency to tenants. Encouragement given to moral and religious conduct," &c. &c. With what results the Society prosecuted their scheme at first may be gathered from the following abstract from the Statistical Return up to Feb. 1846. Their principal

estates were Ballinakil, Gleneaske, and Kilkerrin, all in the west, the latter being in Connemara.

PROGRESSIVE RENTS OF LANDS LET.

Estate.	1838.	1843.	1844.	1845.	1846.
	£.	£.	£.	£.	£.
Ballinakil - -	"	70	187	167	200
Gleneaske - -	41	309	448	508	598
Kilkerrin - -	500	527	687	780	821

All seemed promising; everything was done to promote the welfare of the tenants; even some promise of remuneration for their investment seemed to dawn upon the proprietors, when the potato blight came. The directors nobly did their duty; they supplied the immediate wants of the poor tenants located on their lands; they advised; they encouraged them. "Hopes were entertained," says Colonel Robinson, in his fifth Annual Report, "from the long continued efforts made to introduce rotation systems of husbandry, that the tenants would be induced to place less reliance on potatoes, and cultivate other crops, and no exertions were spared to attain so desirable an end. To further this object I visited the estates in April, and associating freely with the tenants, tried every thing that the greatest anxiety and the most fostering care of their's and the Society's welfare could suggest, to persuade them from the extensive growth of the potato. But so great was the partiality of the Connaught peasant for the potato, so well was its easy mode of cultivation suited to his habits, that all these exertions and labours had but a very

limited success; the new tenants clung to their beaten track, and grew little besides potatoes," &c. This Report was submitted to the Society in Feb. 1847, not long after which Colonel Robinson died. The estates got into comparative disorder; the outlay increased, while the rents diminished, so that it was finally resolved to wind up affairs by relinquishing the leases and dissolving the company. From my own knowledge of the position of the Society's estates I should not say that they were judiciously chosen; but I have been informed by their intelligent and worthy secretary, Mr. Fry, that there was great difficulty at the period of the formation of the Society in procuring lands at all; and certainly such must be the fact, judging from the very exorbitant rents they appear to have paid for them. The winding up of this Society is a great misfortune to the country generally; but does it not prove the inexpediency of farming on a small scale, as Ireland is at present situated? Such men *as tenants* cannot stand the storm; as *proprietors* they would have a much better chance. What Ireland really requires is an infusion of yeomen tilling their own land, and relying on their own resources. This belief so strongly possessed the minds of many of the best friends of Ireland that a Bill has been introduced into Parliament for the formation of a Company (or Companies), under the name of "Farmers' Estate Society." By this bill parties were empowered to purchase lands in fee; to subdivide and resell them to those who could not afford to purchase largely. The minimum of land sold was to be forty acres, and provisions were introduced to prevent the further subdivision of the lands by the said purchasers. The plan is good from its very simplicity, but I do not

learn that anything has hitherto been accomplished by the Company. Some of the provisions appear to me to render it inoperative. Such, for instance, as that limiting the powers of the Act to twenty-one years; again, another compelling the Society to resell any estate they may purchase in the short period of seven years. Notice has, however, been given of applying to Parliament for an amendment of the Act, and in all probability this useful and highly remunerative association will be in full operation ere the close of the present year. "I believe," said Lord Devon, in giving evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons, "that this mode of sale (in small lots) is almost indispensable under the present circumstances of Ireland. However strong the opinion may be, that agricultural improvement would be best promoted by having large farms, and much capital applied to the cultivation of land, although I admit it is a consummation devoutly to be wished, yet I believe that it is a state of things incapable of being attained at a very early period, and I also believe that the enjoyment of moderate sized holdings by persons *as proprietors*, is the only mode to which we can now look for the agricultural and social improvement of the people." Mr. G. A. Hamilton, M. P., in giving his evidence, also makes the following remark:—"I think practically in Ireland, the occupying farmer (landholder?) from twenty to a hundred acres is the most industrious and useful class of farmers we have." Mr. Jeffers, an eminent Dublin solicitor, in giving evidence in favour of the bill, says, "It is a matter of personal knowledge to me, that farmers in Ireland who are not supposed by their neighbours to have any money, have very large sums in banks, and generally lend to neigh-

bouring proprietors on their bonds." "Such men will doubtless avail themselves very largely of such an Act as this." Again, Mr. Jeffers says, "There has been a very extraordinary increase of capital in Ireland if we are to judge from this fact—the surplus stock transferred from Ireland to England from 1838 to 1848 was 13,945,742*l.*, while the stock transferred from England to Ireland was 6,193,000*l.*, making a difference in favour of Ireland of 7,751,000*l.*!!" The date of this examination of evidence on the bill was July 19th, 1848. Thus then the power and the inclination to purchase land by the natives themselves is proved by the best evidence, and one cannot help being surprised that the "Farmers' Estate Society" has not yet been able to commence operations, and I can only account for it from the existence of the clauses in the Act above alluded to, and the inveterate and injurious prejudice of the English against any thing in the shape of an Irish investment. In the present case, the prejudice is most unpatriotic and injurious to their own best interests? The small sub-divisions of land which have caused so much misery and moral degradation in Ireland are on all hands condemned, and better were it that the present race of occupants should emigrate and leave the whole country to be re-colonised, than that such a scandalous and demoralising system should be continued. In some countries the subletting of lands is restrained by law as inconsistent with the social welfare of the country; thus in Austria * no property is allowed to be less than sixty-six acres, and in Bavaria and Nassau there are similar provisions. It was also attempted at the

* Vide evidence of W. Monsell, Esq., before Committee.

first meeting in the Rhenish provinces by the government of Prussia to introduce some measure of the sort. At the time it was not assented to, but whether now passed or not I am not informed. One excellent provision of "the Farmers' Estate Society," is, that they allow the purchase money of the farms sold to be paid by instalments. "The purchaser can thus expend most of the capital he possesses in the cultivation of the land, erecting buildings, and making other improvements, and as he improves he will be the better enabled to pay larger instalments until the purchase shall be completed, and final possession given. A system materially different from the present, under which, the farmer generally gives all he possesses to get possession of a farm, and has no capital left for cultivation or stock.* It is cheering to observe such efforts in the right direction, for if the intentions of the projectors are not carried out, at any rate it is evident that the eyes of the public are opened to the vast capabilities of the country, and that even private enterprise will not long be wanting to develope them. Not only the uncultivated lands have thus been brought prominently before the public, but the inexhaustible sources of profit in the mountains and seas of this island have also received their share of attention. A Society is now establishing under the denomination of the "Great Fisheries of Ireland Company," the object of which is to appropriate for the sustenance of the people those vast stores of wholesome and luxurious food with which the western coasts are known to abound, but which from the poverty of the people have as yet been deplorably neglect-

* Vide Prospectus.

ed. Mr. Nimmo gives the following account of the principal fishing station off the coast of Erris:—
“Northeast of the Staggs, about six miles, in fifty fathom water, is the ‘Yellow Bank.’ It extends from Glenisk hill in Erris, one fourth of the way across the Arran; it abounds with cod and skate, or maiden ray. The whole north shore of Mayo is excellent fishing ground in harvest, but it cannot be pursued in sailing boats, as there are no ports to save them. Off Erris Head, when you open Glenlara E. N. E. about five miles, is an excellent ling bank in thirty-five or thirty-six fathoms. Small cod also abound in the entrance of Belhaven. The sea off the west of Erris abounds in fish, being by far the most productive on the Irish coast, and it is regularly visited by decked wherries from Skerries, Rush, &c., from the east coast, and by hookers from Kinsale, and the south. These vessels being able to stand the heavy sea of the Atlantic can run to the fishing bank in the offing, and, of course, can succeed better than the ordinary boats. The Kinsale hookers bring mackerel nets, which they employ at night near the Bills Rock, and they are used with good success about Clew Bay. The principal white fish bank is between Bofin and Achill, about two and a half leagues north of the former, and three from Achill Head. It is abundantly supplied with all kinds of fish, cod, ling, glassin, mackerel, and gurnet, and a few herring. North of Achill Head, we have a sand track running up Blacksod Bay affording turbot and flat fish. At the Black Rock, is rough ground, but beyond that lies the Iniskealing Bank, extending from five to eight leagues to the west of these islands, abundantly stocked with fish. The Sun Fish Bank lies within sight of land of Achill,

Slievemore bearing E. S. E. by compass, seventy to ninety fathoms. The sea breaks on it in ebb and flood. A sun fish has seven to ten barrels of liver worth 40*l*. There are besides these out-sea fishings, the salmon fishings of Goulamore and Ballycroy, and one in Glenamoy. Immense beds of oysters of the finest and largest kind are found in Blacksod and Broadhaven." This account speaks for itself, and when we look around us and view the vast resources of these districts both on land and in the sea, is it too much to prognosticate that such advantages cannot long remain neglected, lying as they now do but a few hours' journey from the British metropolis? The same observations may be made with regard to the minerals of Ireland. The treasures contained in her mountains are as yet little known, because they have been little sought after. A Company has, however, been formed, "The Shannon Coal and Mining Company," the views of which, if carried out, will be of vast importance, and contribute largely to the prosperity of the country. "This company has been formed for the purpose of opening and working collieries and coal mines underlying extensive properties contiguous to the river Shannon, in the counties of Kerry and Clare, in the province of Munster. The coal of this district is anthracite, or non-flaming coal of excellent quality, and can be easily and cheaply wrought. The concessions also embrace copper, lead, and iron mines, with other metals and minerals, which are found in abundance throughout them, especially in Kerry, which has been called the Cornwall of Ireland. In addition to these concessions, the company has acquired the right, upon very favourable terms, of working mines and minerals on the line of the Upper Shannon, in the culti-

vated district of Slieva-eneran, county of Leitrim, and province of Connaught. The mineral ground, comprising upwards of 25,000 acres, abounds with bituminous coal of a superior quality, adapted for household, manufacturing, and coking purposes; porcelain, potters' and fire clay; and with limestone well fitted for agricultural uses." The completion of that vast and useful work, the Shannon Navigation, will be the means of opening out these wonderful treasures of mineral wealth, and the bare knowledge of these facts, whatever may be the success or failure of the companies embarked in their present development, will doubtless ultimately arouse the activity and enterprise of the country. But, independently of these larger and more prominent schemes, much is quietly undertaken for the benefit of this country by small associations, and also by patriotic individuals. Thus, in Mayo, a model farm has been established at Ballinglin, under a committee of nine Scotch gentlemen, whose names would do honour to any community. The precise object of this association I am not at present acquainted with, but the rank and well-known intelligence of the parties who conduct it, ensure its utility and philanthropy. With regard to individual exertions, I feel delicate in singling out any, where so many are above all praise. Much may be said for, as well as against, the landlords of Ireland. Certainly there have been, and are, many bad men among them; selfish beings, whose only object has ever been to perpetuate abuses, and to grind the poor; men reckless of all social duties, regardless of the misery and degradation of their dependents, so that they could screw the last penny out of hunger, nakedness, and despair. Many such there have been, some such there are still. But times are

changed. Men of this kind are now, we trust, becoming the exceptions, not the rule. The claims of man upon his fellow man are becoming more known and recognised, and there are many properties in Ireland at the present moment, where, in the face of moral and pecuniary difficulties enough to appal the stoutest heart, the proprietors are struggling manfully to perform their social duties ; to render their dependents comfortable ; to visit and relieve the sick ; to teach the ignorant ; to infuse upright and manly principles ; to encourage cleanliness, industry, and moral progress. In fact, Ireland is becoming every day more alive to her faults, and also to her duties ; she has been the victim of the most detestable system of serfdom that ever cursed any Christian country ; for centuries she has been struggling in the Slough of Despond ; once awakened to her real interests, the struggle to free herself will increase in strength and energy, and England will hold out the hand of sisterly affection to encourage and to assist her.

CHAP. XXII.

IRRIGATION. — DRAINING. — STOCK-FARMING. — ADVANTAGES
OF A COUNTRY EDUCATION.

"OUR farms here," said Mr. S., as we set out one morning on a ramble to the highland portion of his estate, "are best adapted at the present time for the breeding and rearing of stock. Let the purchasing price of stock be what it may, the profit on each beast or sheep is the same to the hill farmer. Low prices, therefore, are so far an advantage that thereby capital will go further. If yearlings are at 4*l.* each, 100 will of course cost 400*l.*, whereas at the present low prices the same sum will purchase 150, and yield therefore a larger profit. To those who buy to sell again in a year's time, from 1*l.* to 30*s.* per head is the profit looked for, therefore the more stock you can buy and maintain, the greater your gains will be." "This," replied I, "must be very sure farming. If the profits upon stock remain the same whatever the price at first may be, the mountain pastures should rather increase than decrease in value." "Certainly," said he; "and I have no doubt but that in a short time the mountain pastures will be in consequence much sought after, and good rents obtained. I consider them at present an excellent investment." "Then had you foreseen the present low prices of arable produce you would not have reclaimed so much

land?" "Yes; I should have reclaimed more, but in a different way. By draining and irrigation I would have fostered the natural grasses, increased the quantity and quality of sheep walk, created the largest quantity of dry pasture possible, and laying down meadows in proper places, have provided abundance of fodder for winter use, and extended my dairy in summer." "And is this the plan you would advise me to adopt?" "That of course will depend upon the nature of the soil and surface of your estate. I should advise you to purchase a property having at least two thirds hill and grass land, to one third capable of tillage. I do not think extensive arable operations, particularly if you have to reclaim your fields from the waste, can at present be sufficiently remunerative to a man of small means. His property is no doubt improved in value, but the returns are not sufficiently quick in cash, his farm is worth more, but his available capital is decreasing. The more certain plan to adopt in these remote and wild districts is, to rely upon stock, which, well attended to, will yield a sure profit. Improve your pastures, so that you can increase the stock upon them, and only cultivate—and that near at home—as much arable land as will supply your stock with straw to lie upon during the winter and esculents for their subsistence when the weather is stormy and severe. As your stock increases, increase your arable land in proportion, but not more; and whatever you undertake *do it thoroughly*, and with great consideration; above all, be careful not to let any portion once reclaimed deteriorate. In bog lands there is as much care and energy required to maintain their fertility as to reclaim them. In the long run I am sure you will find my advice will answer. I anticipate what

you are about to remark, but mine is not a parallel case to yours. For years after I commenced, grain fetched a remunerative price; but as things are now, and likely to be, I shall endeavour, by improving my hill pastures, to assimilate the quantity of my stock to my arable land. I shall grow less corn and more green food, and look to stock only, or principally at least, for my profit."

"I quite allow the force of your argument. The pastures appear to me little attended to in these districts; for instance, I see your sheep turned upon land which in England would give them all the rot in a week."

"Nevertheless that is not the case, but still your remark is founded in truth. We ought not to turn out our flocks on the wet bogs; it cannot answer in the end. A little judicious surface draining, after the springs are cut off, will wonderfully improve these wastes, and produce in a short time a far better, healthier, and more abundant herbage."—"Mr. Nimmo, in his Report to the Irish Bog Commissioners, I recollect, bears out your view on the subject. He states that the greater part of the meadows throughout Europe, and especially in Ireland, are formed on bottoms, which have originally been bogs, by means merely of a thin covering of alluvial soil."—"Often that is the case, and perhaps the finest meadows in the world are those which have a vegetable substratum. But the great peculiarity of our Irish wastes is, that immediately on their being laid dry a spontaneous grass arises called Fiorin (*Agrostis stolonifera*), which is admirably adapted for cattle, and makes good sound hay. Where reclaiming operations are conducted on a large scale, it is well to know this fact, but in laying down my meadows I always sow a mixture of the best grasses to assist and improve the fiorin."

"Which are the grasses you conceive most natural to bog land when reclaimed?"—"The Fox-tail grass (*Alopecurus pratensis*) is, I conceive, of all grasses the best, and I should never fail to try it, though certainly I never saw it growing naturally on these lands. Next to that the Cock's Foot grass (*Dactylis glomerata*), the Meadow Fescue (*Festuca pratensis*), and the smooth-stalked meadow grass (*Poa pratensis*) are valuable; and I have frequently seen these and some others growing naturally on the bog in favourable places. Nature suggests what is best to be sown, and I always feel inclined to follow her dictation."

We had now reached the base of a mountain which sloped gently almost from its summit into the vale below. In the centre I observed a strip of about ten acres luxuriant with verdure, whilst on both sides of it heath with a mixture of the coarser aquatics predominated.

"I brought you to this spot," said my friend, "to prove the doctrine I have so often laid down. Three years ago, the whole side of this hill was almost valueless. In the hollow above us, just where the summit of the mountain declines abruptly into an almost perpendicular chasm, is a small lake, very deep, and always full. In stormy weather it overflows, and you may judge of the quantity of the discharge by yon rugged and gaping water-course to our left. At all times, a small stream issues from the lake, and joins the river beyond the bridge, further down the valley. Now, by way of experiment, I determined to appropriate these waters to a useful purpose; and as the slope of the hill was very gradual, I succeeded, at a trifling cost, in irrigating the strip of land you are now looking upon. The effect from the first was extraordinary. The great secret is in

passing the water quickly over the surface. The bog appears then to be gorged or drowned. Much sediment, from the washing of the grounds above, will necessarily be carried over it, and deposited continually among the herbage, and thus each year increases its fertility." "But I perceive the water is particularly clear; and I have always supposed that the benefit of irrigation was mainly, in its mechanical effects, as a carrier and depositor of fertilising matter?"—"More than that. Water, by its detergent quality, will wash off all feculencies, and promote the perspiration and health of the plant. In passing through boggy soil, it dilutes and carries off the astringent principles which would otherwise check the decomposition of the vegetable matter. If a field be, as you see before you, alternately flooded and laid dry, the coarse productions of the soil, such as the sphagna, junci, holci, &c., will disappear, and give way to a finer and more valuable herbage, and better adapted to the new state of the surface. The alopecurus, poa, festuca, and, above all, the fiorin, will appear at once naturally, and the land, hitherto waste, becomes, by the simplest of operations, most valuable." We found the stock grazing on the other side of the hill. There were a few kyloes, but the major part were short-horns. The sheep were of a mixed Cheviot breed, and the lambs were thriving and healthy. The whole of the stock did justice to their pasture, and some of them were half fat. From all I had observed, I every day more and more coincided with my friend's ideas; and it was very evident that stock-farming among these mountains would make a certain and profitable return, with little risk or trouble. Of course, disease will often make some havoc, and decrease the grazier's profits; but this may be in a

great degree averted, by attention to cleanliness, warmth, and shelter.

Nothing can exceed the kindness and hospitality of this worthy family; I feel quite at home, and as if I had been intimate for years. The children, particularly Frank, would be ever with me, if they were allowed. We occasionally fish the pools together, make short excursions into the mountains, and minutely observe all the operations of nature. Edwin is already an entomologist; Catherine has her hortus siccus; and Frank is the happy possessor of two otter skins, in whose capture he took an active part, and he can show flies of his own making, and talk learnedly of hooks and hackles. Were my childhood to come over again, I should wish it were passed in one of these solitudes. To develop the energies of body or mind, there cannot be a better education. Nurtured amid the pure scenes of nature, the mind is best prepared for worshipping nature's God in spirit and in truth. Parents have here, too, a better chance. There is little danger of antagonist principles being instilled, and the heart is more likely to receive, with all faith and simplicity, the sublime principles of Christian morality. Among the children of this family, I have never heard a wish expressed to leave their own sweet valley; they love and reverence their parents; they attend implicitly to their instructions, and their parents have the rare tact of making strict discipline not incompatible with a happy home. Indeed, without a firm and consistent discipline, the home of both parent and child must ever be miserable. Yesterday a letter was received from the eldest boy, and Mrs. S. kindly placed it in my hands. It breathed a wild and daring spirit, but yet was full of affection to his mother. He was about

quitting England, in one of Her Majesty's ships-of war, for the West Indies. The captain was a relation of Mrs. S., and he had taken the young fellow in charge. "I do not see much harm about the boy," said this gentleman, in his letter to Mr. S., "but as I know his faults well, he will find they are met with the strong hand. I hope yet to make him a fine sailor, and worthy, by and by, of issuing orders from his own quarter-deck. Our discipline, which he will have to undergo for eighteen months at least, will give the young gentleman that habit of obedience he now so sadly lacks. I have great hopes of him from one circumstance,—*he tells the truth.*"

CHAP. XXIII.

NEW SETTLEMENT. — FUTURE PLANS. — ENCUMBERED
ESTATES' COURT. — RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES.

WE have now traversed the greater portion of this district; and in selecting my future home, the only difficulty has been the great choice that presents itself. My anxiety to be near Glenduff increases, as I see more of my new friends; but Mr. S., reciprocating, as I know he sincerely does, this feeling, yet maintains his former statement, that nearer the coast would afford greater pecuniary advantages. I have, therefore, made a kind of compromise between sentiment and profit, and have at length, with my friend's entire approbation, selected a townland, two miles and a half from Owenduff, and only separated from the coast by a portion of the plain, and the gently rising grounds that overlook Tullaghan Bay and its various arms running inland. My new domain is 845 acres; at present only 12 are arable, 26 tolerable enclosed meadow and pasture; the remainder is in part black bog, about two to three feet deep, on a substratum of clay and gravel, and high land, occupying the entire of a lofty knoll, an offset of the adjoining mountains. Half-way up the southern side of this green hill, is a beautiful spring, which, bursting copiously from the rock, even at this dry season, promises abundance of excellent water for all purposes. Near this spot will be

our future home! Yesterday, the evening being fine, we all made an excursion to view the new place. Mrs. S. and the children were delighted: it was amusing to hear the thousand impracticable plans propounded by the juniors of the party. The capabilities are certainly encouraging. A kind of natural platform here interrupts the gradual slope of the ground. This may be made considerably wider eastward of the spring, with but little trouble, so that there will be ample room for the house and required offices: the garden we have planned out also; it is to be westward of the house, and will be formed in three terraces, with sloping banks. Below it is a clear, natural pool, several hundred yards in circumference, which will be most useful. This, also, is supplied from a spring, which may be turned through the garden, if necessary.

From my former descriptions you may easily picture to yourselves the views we shall enjoy from our new home and its precincts. Over distant Doona, the waters of Blacksod Bay sparkle in the distance. Rocky Deevilawn is seen far, far at sea. Slievemore raises his cone-like summit into the skies; on the left is dark Currawn and the Ballycroy mountains; to the right, Corlieve and Slieve Alp. Before us an undulating plain stretching for two miles to the foot of the mountains, and disclosing here and there the still surface of many a small lake reposing in the quiet hollows. Richard O'Malley, Mr. S.'s right hand man, of whom I have before made mention, first pointed out this spot to me. He said it had often struck him as more eligible than Glenduff, and as enjoying many advantages that did not exist there. He had been busy all the morning, at the request of his master, in staking out the site of the

house and garden, and he has also been indefatigable in his search after a proper stone for the buildings. As I intend the whole of the interior to be battened, and the exterior walls to be thickly stuccoed with stone lime or cement, if I can procure it, there will not be any elaborate masonry required, so that we shall have little difficulty in collecting stone sufficient for our purpose. The foundations will be deep and firmly grouted with freshly slacked lime, the interstices of the stones being filled with pebbles much in the same mode in which Doona Castle is built. The rising ground behind the house will be planted up to the summit of the hill, leaving a space of about 100 yards between the buildings and the plantation fence. I have also arranged, notwithstanding a smile from my new friends at the oddity of the idea, to have our parlour exactly of the same size, height, and aspect as the dear old oak room at home; and we will have the same furniture, books and pictures, so that perchance, we may sometimes forget that we are in a new and strange land. Mr. S. shakes his head when I talk thus, and says it would be better, as much as possible, to avoid reminiscences, and begin life as it were anew. Perhaps he is right. Had I never known my English home I could have better loved this. But no doubt we shall soon be reconciled to the change. At all events, we shall have too much upon our hands to waste time in reminiscences; and as our new home improves under our labours, our interest in it will, of course, increase, and our regrets gradually subside. Then, this is not like a new country. It is historical all over — full of the associations of olden times, yielding the same fruits, raising the same crops, inhabited by the same animals, birds, and fishes, as

merry England — similar in climate, and occupied by a people intermixed with our own race, and speaking our own language. In about sixteen hours we may at any time step on English ground, and in eight hours more, pace the streets of London. The recent improvements in travelling seem almost to annihilate time and space, and ere long, people will think as little of journeying to the shores of the Atlantic, and locating themselves among the green mountains or fertile plains of Mayo, as they used to think of a tour in Devonshire, or even a trip to Margate. Talking over these and various other matters, planning and replanning, and exploring the hill on all sides, the evening soon passed away. The sun had already sunk beneath the western wave. Slieve-more looked dark in the distance, and the shadows deepened on the craggy slopes of Cuscumcurrah, warning us to return ere the increasing darkness rendered our retreat difficult, if not dangerous. As I descended from the hill and gazed upon the wild amphitheatre around us, the bold outline of the mountains being now alone visible, their sides wrapped in gloom, and the plain like some dark sea intervening, I must confess that I thought with something very like regret upon our pleasant English home, our cheerful fields, our rural village, with its ivied church, where sleep many generations of my forefathers. I felt as Adam felt when the archangel came to close the gates of Paradise behind him : —

“ Departure from this happy place, our sweet
Recess and only consolation left,
Familiar to our eyes ! all places else
Inhospitable appear and desolate,
Not knowing us, nor known.”

My kind friends noticed my dejection, and with that delicacy which ever distinguishes their intercourse, left me for a while to the indulgence of my own sad thoughts. The joyous voices, however, of the children roused me, as they picked their way along the mountain path, calling me, repeatedly, to join their party and partake their merriment. "You will have a far better prospect before you," said Mr. S. as we walked along the margin of the lake, "than I had when we first settled in these wilds. I had neither friends to advise, nor neighbours to cheer me. These western districts were then deemed inaccessible; the people were not so well inclined to strangers; and all the luxuries of life and many of its comforts were unattainable. How different now! and how still more different will all be in a few brief years. The capabilities and advantages of this now neglected region will be known, and we shall probably live to witness the Saxon plough cultivating the greater portion of these now dreary and desolate plains!

The time draws near for my departure, and anxious as I am to join my dear fireside circle, yet I shall leave this excellent and hospitable family with regret. Were I a brother, Mr. and Mrs. S. could not treat me more kindly or show a greater desire to promote my welfare and happiness, and I doubt not, when you all arrive here, you will find the same feeling existing towards every member of my family. Indeed, with such friends near us to assist, console, and advise, I scarcely call ours a case of expatriation. Mr. S., in his quiet way, has promised to aid me in all points, and I know his sincerity so well, that he will do far more than he promises. He will guide us wisely and prudently, and

having succeeded himself, can best point out the right way to others. He and Mrs. S. have proposed that we use his house till ours is ready ; for Frank and Edwin are going to Dublin for some months, for the purpose of education, and they will only have Catherine at home, so that there will be abundance of room for all of us. I have accepted their invitation as frankly as it was given, and it is consoling to me to think that we shall all commence our residence in this country under such pleasant auspices. Our children will find delightful companions ready to receive them with every affectionate demonstration, and as for ourselves we have no cause to repine, but rather to thank the Author of all good for the many blessings thus scattered in our path.

Dublin.

Mr. S. kindly accompanied me thus far on my homeward journey. He is assisting me to conclude the purchase of our new estate ; and as I am to have a title under the Encumbered Estates Act, the matter will be soon disposed of. The rule is to communicate the particulars of the sale to the Commissioners, and if they approve the purchase, the money is paid into court, and the parliamentary title guaranteed. On payment of the money possession is given. This is, indeed, wise and *merciful* legislation. If anything can raise Ireland from her present state of wretchedness, it is this Act. As the law stood in this unhappy country, it was absolutely dangerous to purchase land ; and such a medley of titles, and claims, and interests encumbered almost every property, that to attempt a transfer was, in some cases,

to risk the whole value of the estate in law expenses. The extension of this wise measure to England would be indeed a boon to the over-taxed landed proprietors there; and the value of land would be greatly enhanced by its adoption. As we travelled along, I had much conversation with my friend on the present state and future prospects of Ireland. He gave a most harrowing description of the state of the west, particularly in the years 1826 and 1827. Thousands had died of positive hunger. "We were greatly overpopulated," said he, "and the evil was yearly increasing. The ruinous system of subdiviaion of lands was spreading at a fearful pace, when it pleased God in His wisdom to check, and I trust to overthrow, it utterly. It was a system fraught with evil, moral and political, and, had it not been stopped, nothing could ultimately have saved us from a bloody struggle between the classes." You have asked me to inform myself as to whether middlemen were not the cause of much misery to the lower orders. They certainly were; but the fault was not so much in them as in *the law*.^{*} They were so hampered by legal restrictions, that it was unprofitable for them either to transfer or to improve the land; whilst they were induced to sub-let by the ample means for levying exorbitant rents in the power of distress and *priority* of recovering rent which they exercise as landlords. But place the middleman, as a landlord, on an *equality with other traders*, giving him no more power of recovering his rents than they have for recovering their debts, and the evils of the system would soon cease. That it is greatly on the wane is everywhere manifest, by the numbers of dis-

^{*} Vide Hancock's Impediments to the Prosperity of Ireland.

mantled cottages, and the disappearance of whole villages. Hard, and apparently cruel, however, as these ejections at present appear, yet Mr. S. thinks it will prove to be for the ultimate benefit of the people. By no other method was the evil curable; and it was thought better by many of the proprietors rather to encourage emigration, and to feed the people in the union-houses, than that they should die of hunger or pestilence in their wretched and unwholesome cabins. Among those who are left a great improvement is said to be visible, and as paid labour is gradually substituted for their small and precarious holdings, the people will become more cleanly in their habits, and more satisfied with their condition. Many persons are deterred from settling in Ireland in consequence of the violent religious dissensions which are fostered and kept alive by teachers whose religion enjoins them to "live in peace." For my own part, I view these contests without the slightest anxiety as to the result. As I have already observed, they afford many strong arguments to schismatics and infidels, and destroy more souls under the mask of a love of unity on one side and a love of truth on the other, than all the writings of a Tom Paine or a Voltaire. But the growing spirit of the age is against all these anomalies and inconsistencies; men's eyes are gradually opening to the difficulty, if not absurdity, of coercing the human mind either in one way or the other. The settler in Ireland has nothing to do with these intemperate proceedings; he will wisely stand aloof, and, whatever his creed may be, he will leave to others the enjoyment and benefit of their own opinions, and endeavour, by a quiet and consistent course, to prove the practical excellence of his own. For my part, I feel there is nothing to fear

in settling in this beautiful island. The people naturally are brave, generous, and polite; they are grateful for the kind word, and the *just act*; they are ceasing to be so entirely the creatures of wild impulse, and every passing day is bringing them more under the dominion of common sense and right feeling. Education cannot now be stopped; and it is to that, above all other things, we must look for the regeneration of Ireland.

APPENDIX.

THE following extracts will be read with interest, as corroborating in many points the ideas of the Author, as to the capabilities of Ireland, and the character of her people. To those who may wish to obtain a further and more thorough insight into the domestic habits and peculiar phraseology of our neighbours, the beautiful and accurately illustrated work by Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, will afford a great treat. Mr. Knight's little volume, descriptive of Erris, will also be perused with profit. His sensible account of what has been done, and what may be done, in that remote corner of the British dominions, abounds with interest, and gives rise to much speculative thought. No man knows the district he describes better, if as well; and it is to be hoped that he will be encouraged to extend his labours, as he has half promised, into the neighbouring baronies.

FAREWELL TO BALLYCROY.

"I have left these mountains, and never shall I enjoy the unalloyed excitement, the calm, luxurious solitude, which I found among these wastes. What has refinement to offer me in exchange? Will the overstocked preserve replace the moorland *chase*, with its glorious ridge of purple highlands, its silver lake, and sparkling river,—my wild followers, my tried friends, and the dear cabin, and its snowy tent, peeping from the dark expanse of heather like a white sea-bird from the lap of ocean? Alas! nothing will compensate for these, or give me an equivalent for the joyous intercourse with kindred spirits which I realized and left in *the wilds of Ballycroy*."—*Maxwell's Wild Sports of the West*.

ACHILL.

For a detailed account of the establishment and progress of the Mission or Colony in this interesting island, see a letter inserted in the Appendix to "A Tour round Ireland, by John Barrow," 1836. No part of Ireland affords, from its peculiar circumstances, a fairer and more eligible field for investment than this. The lands bordering the Sound of Achill, and known as the Polrahnnies, Straheens, Kildurnet, and Cloughmore, offer great inducements to the settler. Not only are these districts salubrious and sheltered, and in the midst of splendid scenery, but the lands have been extensively reclaimed at the foot of the mountains, and valuable meadows and pastures extend down to the very shores of the strait. There is also abundance of sea manures and lime close at hand.

BOGS.

"There is a great deal of nonsense written about the waste lands of Ireland—the millions of acres of waste lands. There are, to be sure, millions of acres of land wild and dreary ; but they are not *waste*, if by waste is meant altogether unproductive. Of the mountains of Ireland, especially those of the north and west, where there is not bare rock, the general surface is bog, only fit for the run of young black cattle in the summer season. These districts I consider as inapplicable to any other purpose than that to which they are now applied ; and they cannot be considered as waste, when they rear a quantity of stock which are subsequently fatted on the lower lands. Of the great central bog flows, which have the general appellation of the Bog of Allen, I consider the reclamation, for the present, to any great extent, as hopeless. But not so the shallow bog surfaces of Connemara, Erris, &c. &c., where their level is low, and where, protected by sheltering mountains from the terrible north-west winds of the Atlantic, I hold that they are highly improvable ; that with lime, which is generally to be had convenient, gravel,

which is under the surface, and manure, which may be got from the adjoining sea, or from the manure made by housing cattle in the winter, abundant crops of corn, grass, and potatoes, may be raised; rape, for winter food, or for the making of oil, can, by the simple process of burning the surface and draining, be raised to any extent; and, eventually, these tracts laid down to grass, and the drainage attended to, might become permanently productive, either as meadow or pasture. I am quite sure that the wastes of Erris and Connemara might be brought into productiveness, and made capable of supporting a large, and at the same time not superabundant, population; which only can take place when a property is neglected, and when the owner is a short-sighted blockhead, or a person whose pecuniary difficulties and *law* embarrassments have deprived him of a control over what is called his property." — *The Rev. C. Otway's Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley*, p. 414.

EDUCATION.

"The first step should be, the educational elevation of the people; and I am quite sure the neglect of taking this step into calculation has been one great cause of all the failures in the way of improving their respective properties which the Connaught gentry have to lament."—*Ib.* p. 415.

"Of all the waste lands of Ireland, the shallow bog land, that at an elevation of 200 feet and under from the level of the sea, presenting a varied surface of swells and hollows, with ample and rapid drainage to the adjoining lakes and rivers, is the most improvable waste land in Ireland; while the mountain districts, from their height, and the flat low bogs from their depth and difficulty of drainage, present comparatively unconquerable difficulties. Here is the evident mistake and misapplication of the funds of Societies who have hitherto undertaken the improvement of waste lands; they have chosen either mountains, or flat and low bogs, and have sunk money to a large extent in impracticable adventures."—*Ib.* p. 411.

TIMBER.

"I never saw a country better adapted to the growth of trees, both in climate and soil. Whilst the richer ground is calculated for the oak, ash, and elm, and the poorer and more mountainous for the larch and birch tree, the wet and marshy soil would repay a very high rent by the cultivation of willow." — *Sir R. C. Hoare's Tour*, p. 311.

IRISH CHARACTER.

"The Irishman is a very different being from either the Englishman, or his neighbour the Welchman. The traveller in Ireland will see a hardy and active race of people, civil and ever willing to serve and oblige the stranger. He will see that Nature has not been sparing in the endowment of his abilities, though poverty has denied him the power of improving them by education. A stranger will be struck with the *natveté*, propriety, and singularity of many of the expressions made use of; in short, *the stuff is good*, and requires only the skill and management of an able hand to form and fashion it." — *Ib.* p. 316.

CAPABILITIES.

"If we look to the temperature of the Irish climate, the fertility of its soil, the bays, estuaries, and rivers with which its provinces are intersected, — in short, if we consider the numerous and great advantages which Nature has profusely lavished upon this island, every one must view with secret satisfaction the latent riches and succour which the mother country may in future times derive from the daughter." — *Ib.* p. 330.

THE IRISH PEASANTRY.

"During the scarcity of last year (1824) many instances came to our knowledge of the generous kindness which is silently exercised by the peasantry around us. A poor woman belonging to the lowlands died here of the fever.

Her sucking infant, as may well be supposed, did not survive : but a little girl of four years old was left a hapless orphan. His Honour inquired of the woman who told the melancholy tale, what was become of the child ? ‘ Sure, I have her with my own,’ was the answer ; ‘ there is no one in this country that she belongs to, and unless your Honour will be her friend, I must take to her myself.’ This, you will observe, was in a time of general distress, and from one who had a family of her own to support. Little danger, indeed, is there that among the warm-hearted sons of Erin the orphan or the fatherless should ever want a friend. The kindness which they receive is not from their equals alone. There is scarcely a gentleman’s house in the country which does not shelter one or more of these children of poverty ; and in the reciprocal attachment that is thus fostered, there is something so patriarchal, as to call forth the sympathy of our best feelings.” — *Letters from the Irish Highlands*, p. 207.

IRISH WOMEN.

“ I was much and agreeably surprised to find how eagerly our poor women here (Renvyle in Galway) engaged in making up the clothes, the materials of which were last year supplied by the brotherly kindness of the English ; and how much better they acquitted themselves, as sempstresses, than could have been expected. They worked late and early. It was, indeed, with mingled feelings of pain and pleasure that I noticed the cheerfulness, the alacrity, that was for the time imparted to their looks, and the many little rural presents of eggs, gloves of their own knitting, &c. &c. which, in grateful return, were brought to those who acted upon this occasion the pleasing part of agents to their distant benefactors. They seemed to ask nothing better, than a continuation of employment ; and many of them gave a ready assent to an observation which I was often led to make, that the money thus earned was more valuable than tenfold its amount in gratuitous donation.” — *Ib.* p. 59.

IRISH LABOURERS.

“‘Is the case the same, you ask, with respect to the men?’ One simple fact will, I think, satisfactorily answer your question. When the roads were first undertaken in this part of the country, it was given out, that all who wished it, should be employed. The population is so large, the number able and *willing* to work so great, that after the first pressure of want was over, it was found necessary to exclude the boys, and limit it to those who were without any other means of subsistence. Instances were then known of boys standing on stones and sods of turf, to obviate any objection to their age from the lowness of their stature. The truth appears to be this: both men and women willingly engage in any kind of labour for which they *are sure of being paid*; but they are naturally discouraged from venturing on any speculations, the failure of which involves them in hopeless ruin. Unfortunately, they have this year met with another of those disappointments, which have so often and so cruelly checked the spirit of industry and improvement in Ireland. Owing to delays in the remittances from Government, payment on the roads was deferred from day to day. Many a long week were they kept in lingering expectation, till at length, when they received the money, it was no longer their own. The whole, or nearly the whole, was engaged to pay for the potatoes on which they had been subsisting during the winter, and which they had, of course, purchased at a disadvantage. This, I am persuaded, is the reason of their reluctance to engage in the contracts by which it is intended to continue the road-making, instead of allowing them to work by the day. I may mention, as a proof of their capability of exertion, that a gentleman in this neighbourhood, being desirous the other day of making a road to his newly-opened quarry for marble, easily mustered between seven and eight hundred men, not only among his own tenantry, but likewise from the surrounding villages, who voluntarily engaged themselves, on the promise of being supplied with

their daily provisions, without any further recompence; and one mile and a quarter of deep bog was actually cut through, drained, and gravelled in the course of one week."—*Id.* p. 62.

RECLAMATION OF BOGS.

"In answer to an assertion made by some persons, that a bog deprived of water is a *caput mortuum*, on which no plant will vegetate, either spontaneously or by any alteration in the composition of its surface that can be effected, it may be observed, that although bog, when first drained, appears to have lost the power of supporting aquatic plants, without a capability of supplying food for the vegetation of plants of a different and more useful nature,—still, if we have patience till the bog-moss*, which composes the upper surface of the bog, shall have subsided, and by the near approach of their mossy fibres (which, when alive, are kept asunder by water), and exposure to the atmosphere, shall become (to a certain degree) putrid, it will be found that various grasses of good quality, and even white clover, will vegetate spontaneously on its surface. But it is not to be supposed that an active people will thus suffer nature, unassisted, slowly to attain a desirable alteration on the upper surface of drained bogs; they will naturally join hand in hand with her, and by the simple process of digging or ploughing up the surface of the drained bog, and by gathering it into heaps, and, in dry weather, setting fire to them (having previously mixed a portion of clay among the heaps, which is always to be found in inexhaustible quantities beneath the bog), accomplish in two years what nature, unassisted, might have attained, less perfectly, in ten. This species of manure, which by long experience, both in Ireland and in Scotland, has been ascertained to be the most efficacious in altering the properties of pure peat, is the *ashes of peat*, taken from the most solid part of the bog, nearest the bottom. The composition of these ashes is usually found to be burnt clay, containing a large

* *Sphagnum palustre.*

proportion of oxyde of iron, and a small portion of charcoal. From this analysis, we may be led, with tolerable certainty, to draw the conclusion, that clay taken from the bottom of the bog, which must be similar to that contained in the peat immediately above it, and mixed and burned with the moss that forms the upper part of the bog, would, by increasing the quantity of the clay, have more effect in the decomposition of peat, so as to render it capable of affording nourishment to plants of almost every description, than the red ashes produced by the under stratum of the bog alone, which, as already stated, has been universally approved of. Mr. Nasmyth, of Hamilton, in his admirable 'Essay on the Properties and Uses of Peat,' states, that cohesive earth which has suffered torrefaction, such as brick-dust, is a most powerful solvent of peat. The next manure in value to ashes is lime, which, however, should be used but sparingly in the first instance; but it is admirable in producing sweet herbage in surface-dressing on reclaimed bog." — *Vide Appendix to the First Report from the Commissioners on the Nature and Extent of Bogs in Ireland*, p. 30.

ON THE DRAINAGE OF BOGS.

"Whether deep or surface-drainage is best adapted to the reclamation of bog, is a point of great importance, because it must be evident that to sink drains to the bottom of bogs, so deep as those reported on, would occasion such an expense as the subsequent improvement of the land would hardly cover. But we have the most satisfactory proof, in the reports of our engineers, that such deep drainage is not necessary, and that the surface of a bog may be highly improved, so as to bear crops, without drawing off the water from the lower strata.

"Mr. Longfield* considers, that the efficacy of drains is not proportioned to their depth beyond a certain extent; his system, therefore, is one of main, minor, and cross drains, of

* The gentlemen whose opinions are here quoted, were engineers employed by the commissioners.

moderate dimensions. The main drain he purposes to be from ten to fifteen feet in depth; the surface-drains to be four feet in depth, and four feet in breadth, with perpendicular sides. He argues, from his own experience, that perpendicular surface-drains do not collapse or close together; that they do not retain or catch the waters falling on the surface, but harden, and become, in fact, a bog wall.

“Mr. Edgeworth, in his Report, does not approve of a general system of deep drainage; because he considers deep drains to be little more effectual than shallow. He also recommends that the sides of the drains should be perpendicular, and the bottom, or sole of the drain, to be in the shape of an inverted arch, so as to resist the lateral and upward pressure of the mass of bog, and to form a narrow channel for the water, whereby its current will be accelerated, and will keep the drain free.

“Mr. Richard Griffith, jun., states, that the chief desideratum in cutting bog-drains, is to form them in such a manner that they shall keep themselves clean, and that their sides shall have no tendency to collapse. The first of these objects, he thinks, may be obtained by making the bottom of the drains sufficiently narrow, proportioned to the quantity of water which is likely to pass through them, and the sides may be prevented from falling in by giving them a sufficient slope. That which he has recommended is six inches increase of width on either side for every foot in height; thus the proper dimensions of minor drains are nine feet top, one foot bottom, eight feet deep. He observes, that the bog-drains which he has seen made with perpendicular sides, are always in *firm bog*, and that, in his opinion, it is utterly impracticable to form such drains in very wet bog. He is induced, further, to recommend drains narrow at bottom, from a consideration of economy, as they contain fewer cubic yards in a running perch of work, and the principal part of the excavation is at the surface, where no pitching is required.

“Mr. Townshend maintains, that small drains, with level-

ling and trimming the surface, will effect the purposes of drainage completely, and that the immense saving of expense, time, and risk in execution, will make them, beyond comparison, preferable to the deep ones." — *Second Report of the Commissioners.*

ON THE NATURE AND PROPERTIES OF BOG.

(*Extracted from Mr. Bald's Report to the Commissioners.*)

"Bog is formed of vegetable matter, with some small part generally of earthy, metallic, and saline substance. In the lower strata of bog, the vegetable matter is formed in a state of decomposition; in the higher strata, in a state of rixney; and on the surface in a living state, unless when drained, or cut away for turf. In Ireland, the bogs are formed of flag-plants in the lower strata, and of moss-plants afterwards, with different admixtures of decomposed leaves, the small branches and bark of wood,—the larger parts of wood, consisting of oak, pine, yew, and willow, being still found in a recent state; they are all in a semi-fluid state, from the water they contain, and which is the support of the moss of which the bogs are principally formed. The cause of bog may therefore be fairly presumed to be, the obstructions given by the inequalities of the ground, or the falling of trees or other substances, to the free passage of the water, supplied either by springs or by rain, affording the proper food of the flag and moss-plants of which it is formed. As effects cease with their causes, so to give a perfect free passage to the waters from the substratum of bog, must destroy the food of the flags and mosses, produce their consequent death, decomposition, and formation into vegetable mould; which, in its progress, can be rapidly increased by periodical flooding with water, and drying by mechanical mixture, by paring and burning the surface, by the addition of other recent vegetable matter, or animal, earthy, or stony matter, or by all these means at different times, or any of them most suited to the situation of the particular bogs. When reduced to a state of

vegetable mould, without the addition of any earthy or stony matter, bogs are capable of producing luxuriant grass, both for pasture and meadow, potatoes, turnips, cabbage, rape, flax, oats, barley, and rye in abundant crops, also timber-trees, and, I do believe, hemp; but having no positive certainty of the fact, only offer my belief."

TREES.

Dr. Paterson, on the Climate of Ireland, p. 185., mentions, "that ascending the lofty mountain of Lough Salt, a few years past, stood a very respectable wood, facing directly the north-west; and from this place, through a space of some miles westward, in a rough mountainous country, several woods were growing on exposed heights within these forty years. Page 188., he says: "The trees in Kilderry, the oldest of which were planted prior to the year 1711, grow in a soil whose upper stratum is peat, and whose under stratum is either a gravelly loam or a sea mud. They are situated in a flat space of ground, very much exposed to the south-west gales." In a note, Dr. Paterson also remarks, "that at Kilderry young trees thrive remarkably well. General Hart, within these three or four years, has planted above thirty thousand trees of various kinds, some of them in moory ground, without breaking up the general surface, but merely by opening holes and mixing the clay with the peat, afterwards keeping them firm by surrounding them with the sods cut off the surface of the holes." At p. 194. he says, "At Fairhead, the most northerly extremity of Ireland, and exposed to the fury of the North Sea, the mountain-ash, beech, and oak, with other indigenous trees, grow luxuriantly within fifteen or twenty yards of high-water mark. In every other part along the coast, where land is of the same form, viz. very high, it is covered with thriving wood."

"The plantations," says Mr. Bald, "made by the late Marquis of Sligo, on a heathy and exposed hill, with the upper stratum chiefly composed of peat, eastward of the town of Westport, without any previous preparation, are in a

remarkably thriving state, and composed of larch, pine, and various other species of trees. Natural oaks grow on all the boggy hills throughout this district, alone kept down by the browsing and injury of cattle. Therefore all those bogs which rise to an altitude too great for the profitable cultivation of grain, can, with even superior advantage to the public and the individual, be applied to the production of timber by planting and fencing alone."

VEGETABLE MOULD.

"By the addition of earthy or stony matter to vegetable mould, a soil is produced of the highest possible fertility, and more easy and certain in all the operations of agriculture, capable of producing all the crops which our climate affords, with the single exception of wheat. Vegetable mould is well known to be the most truly valuable of all the manures to the grounds of this country, and indeed of most others also." — *Vide Mr. Bald's Report.*

Lord Meadowbank, in a publication of the year 1802, mentions of peat moss reduced to the state of vegetable mould by decomposition, and used as a manure: "Both the power and the duration of the manure have now stood the test of a great variety of trials, and considerable extent of ground and of much variety of soil, continued without intermission the last six years; hitherto it has been found equal, and indeed preferable, to common farm-yard dung for the first three years, and decidedly to surpass it afterwards." — *Ib.* p. 133.

VARIETIES OF PEAT OR BOG.

"1. Fibrous peat, called by the natives red bog, and sometimes brown bog. It consists of several varieties of moss and other plants, whose organization is perceptible, but approaching towards a state of decay; it is of a tough, spongy nature, and is seldom used as fuel.

"2. Fluid peat, or quagmire, is usually situated on the

summits of the bogs, in the vicinity of the springs or sources of the streams. It consists of decayed vegetable matter, saturated with water.

"3. Compact peat, generally known by the name of black bog, consists of vegetable matter in a more advanced state of decay than the fibrous peat.

"4. Turbary, or turf bog, is that part of the bog where turf is cut for fuel. It is composed principally of compact peat."
—*Vide Report of Mr. David Aher*, p. 83.

EXPENSE OF RECLAMATION.

"The process of cultivation after drainage consists in paring, burning, and coating the surface with limestone, gravel, and clay, in various quantities, at the rate of from five to fifteen hundred loads per Irish acre, each load weighing about six hundred weight. In some places, only paring and burning is resorted to, which is a cheap method of reclaiming black bog, and succeeds extremely well. The difference in the depth of reclaimed bog does not seem to have any effect on the produce of its crops. The best rotation of crops for these bogs (in Queen's County) appears to be the following: viz.:—

"1st year, potatoes or rape.

"2nd year, oats laid down with hay seed and white clover.

"3rd year, meadow, after which it may be used as pasture for some years.

"Sometimes two or three successive crops of potatoes, as also oats, are taken off without any additional manure; however, it would be advisable to add a small quantity of gravel to each crop. The bog, being previously drained, may be prepared for the foregoing succession of crops, by covering its surface with gravel an inch in thickness, being at the rate of 360 tons to an Irish acre, which, with the assistance of portable railroads, may be laid on the surface for 8*l.* 12*s.* per acre, as will appear by the following estimate.

	£	s.	d.
Digging and filling 360 tons of gravel at 2 <i>d.</i> per ton	3	0	0
Drawing the same from gravel pit at 2½ <i>d.</i> per ton	3	15	0
Spreading at ½ <i>d.</i> per ton	-	0	15
Cost of railway and waggons	-	0	10
Wear and tear, and removing	-	0	7
Damage to gravel pit	-	0	5
		8	12
Draining as per estimate	-	1	17
Total expense of draining and gravelling an Irish acre of bog	} 10 9 9		

being at the rate of 6*l.* 9*s.* 6*d.* per English acre.

"The bog thus improved will be worth from 25 to 35 shillings per Irish acre.*

"Planting on bog may be carried on successfully to a very great extent. The principal kind of trees which are found growing on the bogs are fir, alder, birch, beech, hazel, willow, and holly, all of which appear to thrive as luxuriantly, or nearly so, on well drained compact peat, of any depth, as on the upland soil. Soft red bog, besides draining, requires a few shovelfuls of clay and limestone gravel to be thrown about the roots."—*Ib.* p. 92.

SUCCESSIVE GROWTH OF TREES.

"In the bog of Clonty-glass the turf banks exhibit three successive growths of trees, which, with part of the stems attached to them, are found remaining undisturbed from the original situation in which they grew. The first, or oldest growth, is in contact with the gravel, being from 18 to 24 inches in height. They are separated from the second or middle growth by a stratum of very compact black peat, called stone turf, three feet in thickness; the roots and

* In perusing the foregoing statements, we must bear in mind that they were written long previous to the withdrawal of protection to agriculture.

stems extend about 4 feet in height, over which there is a stratum of fibrous peat of a light brown colour, about 18 inches thick, and on this a third growth appears, not more than about two feet in height, and is covered with moss, grass, rushes, and heath, for about 9 inches in depth. The stems of this growth are sometimes visible above the surface." — *Ib.* p. 93.

ANALYSIS OF PEAT.

Twenty-four cubic inches of compact blackish-brown turf, recently cut from a turf bank in the bog of Abbeyleix, weighed 6544 grains; being left in a warm room twelve days, was reduced to 13 cubic inches, and in weight 1640 grains, which produced 320 grains of charcoal, containing four cubic inches. 2000 grains of this turf, well dried, gave 100 grains of yellowish-red ashes, which were found to contain —

	Parts	Other Specimens varied as under.			
		Parts	Parts.	Parts.	Parts.
Carbonate of lime -	35	61	21	27	
Gypsum -	31	22	6	9	
Carbonate of magnesia	3	0	0	0	
Silex -	13	8	25	26	
Alumine -	10	5	26	21	
Oxide of iron	8	4	22	17	
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	100	100	100	100	
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— *Ib.* p. 93.

Professor Wade has published, in obedience to the wish of the Commissioners, an interesting and highly instructive "Memoir of the Vegetable Matter of Bogs." "It is well known," he says, "that all boggy grounds are not only thickly covered over with mosses, but that, in a half-decayed state, they in a great measure contribute to their solidity. The bog moss (*Sphagnum*) appears to be most predominant, and performs the chief share in the generating of turf bogs. Mosses retain moisture for a length of time without rotting, and from this quality, are worthy of attention in many points of view; and it is singular that no moss has been discovered liable to the attack of insects or worms. Many species of lichens are also

to be met with in bogs. The rein-deer lichen is to be found in abundance on our heathy bogs. The different species and varieties of the cup-moss, tipped with their beautiful and conspicuous scarlet tubercles, are likewise to be seen adhering to the turfy surface ; also the heath-moss (*Lichen ericetorum*), the ground-lichen (*Lichen caninus*), and many other species. I have no doubt but most of our good grasses may be cultivated on reclaimed bog. Some of them I have occasionally met with in bogs in their unreclaimed state, as the white hay-seed grass, the highly valuable cock's-foot grass, and the meadow fescue ; the tall fescue, and the celebrated creeping bent grass, or fiorin (*Agrostis stolonifera*), is known to be abundant."—*Vide Appendix*, No. 4.

A pamphlet published by Mr. Murray was lately placed in my hands, entitled "A Sketch of the State of Ireland, Past and Present," which I perused with interest; I know not which pleased me most, the matter or the style. The author seems to have combined in his composition all the majesty and antithetical force of Tacitus; and he at least equals that great writer in his vivacity and terseness of description. Recommending a perusal of the work itself, I have ventured to extract a few passages which appear to bear upon the subjects I have discussed in the foregoing pages.

IRISH CHARACTER.

"With genius they are profusely gifted, with judgment sparingly ; to acquire knowledge they find more easy than to arrange and employ it ; inferior in vanity only to the French, and in wit superior perhaps even to the Italian, they are more able to give, and more ready to receive, amusement than instruction ; in raillery and adulation they freely indulge, but without malignity or baseness. It is the singular temper of this people, that they are prone equally to satirize and to praise, and patient alike of sarcasm and flattery ; inclining to exaggerate, but not intending to deceive, you will applaud them rather for sincerity than truth. Accuracy is

not the merit, nor duplicity the failing, of a lively but uncultivated people. The passions lie on the surface, unsheltered from irritation or notice; and cautious England is too fond of recognizing the Irish character only by those inconsistencies and errors, which her own novercal government has contributed to produce or perpetuate. The nobility and affluent gentry spend much or all their fortunes and time in England, leaving their places to be filled, in the country by hired agents, in the city by a plebeian aristocracy. A great evil, not because the country is drained by remittances, but because she is widowed of her natural protectors. The loss is, not of money, but manners; not of wealth, but of civilization and peace."

THE PEASANTRY.

"The condition of the peasant was of late (1807) utterly, and is still almost, barbarous. What the Romans found the Britons and Germans, the Britons found the Irish,—and left them. The neglect of the conquerors, the degeneracy of the colonists, and the obstinacy of the natives, have preserved, even to our day, living proofs of the veracity of Cæsar and Tacitus; of this, many will affect to be incredulous—of the Irish, lest it diminish the character of their country—of the English, because it arraigns the wisdom and policy of their system. But the experienced know it to be true, and the impartial will own it. The cultivator of the land seldom holds from the inheritor; between them stand a series of sub-landlords and tenants, each receiving a profit from his lessee, but having no further interest or connexion with the soil. The last in the series must provide for the profits of all; he therefore parcels out, at rack-rents, the land to his miserable tenantry. Here is no yeomanry, no agricultural capitalist, no degree between the landlord and labourer; and the words 'peasantry' and 'poor' are synonymous. The peasantry of Ireland are generally of the Roman Catholic religion, but utterly and disgracefully ignorant; few among them can read, fewer write. Popish legends and

pagan tradition are confounded and revered; for certain holy wells and sacred places they have extraordinary respect; thither crowd the sick for cure, and the sinful for expiation: and their priests, deluded or deluding, enjoin those pilgrimages as penance, or applaud them, when voluntary, as piety. The religion of such a people is not to be confounded with one of the same name, professed by the enlightened nations of Europe."

NECESSITY OF MORE GENERAL EDUCATION.

"The remedy of this evil must be sought in its causes—a narrow and sectarian plan of education, the mistaken policy of the popish priesthood, the absence or indolence of the established clergy,—sources of more and greater evils than Ireland thinks, or England would believe. To the government I should say, 'Educate your people:' I care not by what system if it be capacious, nor at what cost if it be productive. Between systems of public instruction I will not decide; *that*, however, must be preferable, which acts most by incitement and least by force. I should even, not unhesitatingly, venture to propose, that those only should vote at elections who could write and read their own affidavits of registry. Is it not monstrous in theory as well as practice, that the grossest ignorance should influence the choice of a legislator as much as the most cultivated understanding? To the Roman Catholic priesthood I would say, 'You profess to be ministers of light, not of darkness; you *should* advance learning, you **SHALL** not impede it; your tenets shall not be invaded, but your flocks **SHALL** be instructed. If you will not co-operate in a generous system of national education, expect no favour from the nation—you shall have none.' But to the Established clergy what shall I urge? These are not days of sloth. A friend to religion, I am an enemy to salaried idleness. To the 2500 parishes I would have 2500 parsons; no curates at 50*l.* a year, nor absentees at 2000*l.*; no starving zeal, no lazy affluence. The ecclesiastical establishment which laymen are invoked to de-

feud, churchmen should support by their presence, dignify by their piety, and extend by their example."

Without pretending to adopt all the 'opinions put forth in this eloquent essay, I think I have quoted sufficient to rouse the reader's reflection, and to make him desirous of seeking a better acquaintance with pages so boldly and forcibly penned.

FARMERS' ESTATE SOCIETY.

I cannot close this my testimony to the capabilities of Ireland without directing the earnest attention of all well-wishers for her future prosperity to a society constituted under a special act of Parliament, entitled "the Farmers' Estate Society." Should the highly respectable parties from whom this attempt at the amelioration of their common country emanates, meet with that support from the British public which they so justly merit and so reasonably claim, a new aspect will soon pervade the sister island, and the only real panacea to her wrongs and her sufferings be at once and successfully applied. For by this, education, industry, and order, will be at once promoted and encouraged. The Earl of Devon, the Earl of Courtown, Sir Matthew Barrington, Bart. (names ever associated with true patriotism, and ever foremost where Ireland is to be benefited), together with other respectable parties, stand forward as the promoters of this truly useful association; and as their views are so completely in unison with the design of my work, I need no apology for presenting to my readers a short abstract of the objects they have in view, and of earnestly commending their cause to the active patronage and co-operation of every friend of these two countries, whose interests and prosperity are and ever must be so closely united. "The formation of this society," says the prospectus, "has been long contemplated by many persons interested in Ireland, as likely to be most beneficial to that country. Supported by individuals of practical experience, and favourably received by the government, it is now for the first time brought under

public notice. Notwithstanding the fact that Ireland is almost entirely an agricultural country, possessed of superior natural resources, and although its inhabitants may be classed among the most laborious of any people in Europe, it is yet well known that the soil has, till very lately, been altogether avoided by capitalists, as not offering an adequate reward or security for the investment of property, or the application of industry and skill; and notwithstanding its possession of natural advantages second to no other country in Europe, it is yet among the most wretchedly cultivated. This has arisen in a great measure from the miserably dependent condition in which not the peasantry only, but the farmers, have existed for years past—a dependency so complete, that there is scarcely any middle class of agriculturists, of yeomanry, or small freehold proprietors; whilst in England, and in almost every other country, a great body of such proprietors are scattered through the land.

“The want of an independent and industrious MIDDLE CLASS OF YEOMANRY is practically one of the great evils of Ireland, both physical and social.”

“The ‘FARMERS’ ESTATE SOCIETY’ is formed to correct this essential evil. It will supply a middle class of agriculturists, and will give the thrifty and industrious farmer the opportunity of acquiring an estate in his farm upon terms at once advantageous to himself and to the country at large—thereby creating a yeomanry and body of small proprietors, such as at present exist in many European countries, and in the Channel Islands. The improved cultivation, the increased value of land, and the security and attachment to the laws, likely to follow such a change, are obvious and undeniable.

• “Similar societies exist in France and Savoy, and have been found most beneficial to the farmers, and profitable to the shareholders; also in the islands of Guernsey and Jersey, and there the facility of obtaining a proprietary right to land, without paying down the purchase money, is found to be a strong incentive to early habits of economy and prudence.

A man having paid down in cash part of the value of the land he holds, is stimulated by the most powerful impulse to redeem the annual instalments, and disengage his estate from the incumbrance of the balance of the purchase money. In the eyes of a person so circumstanced, labour loses its repulsive character, for he feels that he is working for himself; he has an object constantly before his mind, which he steadily pursues, he feels proud of his position, and the spirit of independence is fostered within him.

“The passion of Ireland — a desire for land — will be met by this Society, which, while it will in a gradual and legitimate manner, create what is so much wanted, a class of small resident proprietors, will, at the same time, prevent the small sub-division of land, which has been so ruinous to the country.

“Such a body will co-operate, as in other countries, with the larger proprietors, for the better cultivation of the soil; in acting as poor law guardians, jurors, and in the other duties of landed proprietors. The labouring population will be greatly benefited, as it may be fairly expected that every such purchaser as this society contemplates, will be an improver, and as a proprietor have a direct interest both in the minute increase of his own cultivation, and in keeping down poor rates by the employment of the able-bodied labourer. He will also be an unpaid police officer, for the preservation of the peace of the district in which he resides, and in the discovery and punishment of the perpetrators of outrages, in the suppression of which he will be as deeply interested as the larger proprietor in his neighbourhood.

“Results such as these will be admitted on all hands, and by all parties, to be invaluable. It remains to be shown that they are to be obtained in a manner that will be remunerative to those who embark in the operation, and also that they can be placed within the reach of those for whose benefit they are designed.

“The Report of the Commissioners appointed by her Majesty to inquire into the State of Landed Property in Ireland,

has lately being presented to Parliament, and in it is the following statement :—

“ We believe that there is a large number of persons in Ireland possessing a small amount of capital, which they would gladly employ in the purchase and cultivation of land, and a still larger number now resident in different parts of the country, and holding land for uncertain or limited terms at a rent, who would most cheerfully embrace the opportunity of becoming proprietors. The gradual introduction of such a class of men would be a great improvement in the social condition of Ireland. A much larger proportion of the population than at present would become personally interested in the preservation of peace and good order, and the prospect of gaining admission into this class of small land-owners would often stimulate the renting farmer to increased and persevering industry.’

“ The proprietors of Government $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. stock in Ireland amount to about 22,000, and of these, one-half and upwards (say 11,200) are proprietors of sums of 200*l.* and under. It is well known, that a very large proportion of these are tenant farmers ; many of whom, though apparently in indigence, possess, besides their investments in the Government funds, considerable sums lodged in the Savings’ Banks. It is notorious, that many of these would prefer an investment of their money in the purchase of the fee of the lands of which they are now tenants. If any evidence of this truth were wanting, it is supplied in the fact of the very large sums now paid for the goodwill, or what is called the tenant-right in farms, though only held at will, or for very short terms ; and which the Land Commissioners’ Report of evidence shows to frequently reach an amount greater than the value of the fee simple.

“ The ‘ Farmers’ Estate Society ’ proposes to take measures to satisfy the want indicated by these facts, and to carry out the views of the Land Commissioners, as expressed in the foregoing extract, by purchasing eligible estates in fee, as they come into the market, and selling them afterwards in

small lots of not less than forty statute acres (24A. 2R. 31P. Irish), the preference being given to the tenant in possession, if unobjectionable in other respects, and the purchase money taken in half-yearly payments. The purchase money being thus taken by instalments, the purchaser can expend any capital he possesses in the cultivation of the land, erecting buildings, and making other improvements; and as he improves he will be the better enabled to pay larger instalments, until the purchase shall be completed; a system materially different from the present, under which the farmer generally gives all he possesses to get possession of a farm, and has no capital left for cultivation or stocking.

“Provision will be made to prevent the subdivision of any farm so purchased to less than twenty acres, on the principle of the Act of the 31 Elizabeth, c. 7., which was passed before the introduction of the poor law into England.

“That the operations of the Society will be sufficiently remunerative to render its shares a desirable mode of investment, the promoters have the best grounds for believing. The profits will accrue from the difference between the sum for which an estate will sell in gross, and for cash, and the aggregate of the sums it will bring if sold in small parcels, to be paid for in deferred instalments; and also from the interest on the portions of the purchase money thus allowed to lie for a fixed period in the hands of the purchaser. Tables exhibiting these data have been prepared by the actuary with great care, and taking the price of land sold in large parcels at the rate of $22\frac{1}{2}$ years' purchase, being the average of 20 to 25 years, and calculating the selling price by the Society in small estates at the latter rate of 25 years' purchase, it appears that after deducting for cost of management, and charging compound interest on the instalments, and crediting the purchaser with similar interest on his payments, when made punctually, the profit to the shareholders will be, at the least, 9% per cent.

“This profit may be much increased by a partial adoption of the system of the Prussian Land Banks: issuing the debentures of the society to the sellers of estates, and those who

have encumbrances thereon, and subsequently receiving these securities from the purchasers in payment of their instalments.

"As the payment of the purchase money will commence in six months from each investment, there will be no delay in the realization of income, as in railway and other public companies. Interest of 4l. per cent will therefore be paid to each shareholder on the amount of his calls, with a *bonus*, as the profits shall be received.

"The intended law for facilitating the transfer of landed property will bring many estates into the market; and forced sales, in the present state of the country, (when persons having ready money to invest are not likely to become purchasers), would be ruinous to all interested in property. But if capitalists find the state of the country improved, they will invest in the purchase of land in Ireland with as much confidence, and at as high rates, as they do now in Scotland, a country far inferior in climate and soil. The owners, incumbrancers, and annuitants on property, as well as the tenants and public generally, are therefore deeply interested in the success of the society.

"Applications for shares to be addressed to the secretaries, 10, Ely Place, Dublin.

"COMMITTEE. — EARL OF DEVON.

LORD MONTEAGLE.

SIR EDWARD R. BOROUGH, Bart.

WM. MONSELL, Esq. M. P.

ROBERT R. GUINNESS, Esq.

ROBERT BRAMSTON SMITH, Esq.

EARL OF COURTOWN.

SIR DAVID ROCHE, Bart.

JAMES FAGAN, Esq., M. P.

FRANCIS GOOLD, Esq.

WILLIAM H. BARRINGTON, Esq.

ROBERT OWEN, Esq."

The Farmers' Estate Society has already commenced operations on a moderate scale, by the purchase, on advantageous terms, of sundry parcels of land; and as a mode of testing the highly beneficial tendency of such investments,

both to the shareholders and to those whom the society may locate upon their lands as freeholders and permanent settlers, the result will, I believe, prove satisfactory even far beyond present expectation. It cannot be otherwise, when, looking at the names affixed to the prospectus as promoters and directors, we find there not only persons of high station and great influence, but also men of sound practical views, of enlarged intelligence, and undoubted patriotism. It is impossible to limit the extent to which this Society may find it desirable to extend their operations. As affording every necessary facility for intending emigrants to settle on their native soil, as retaining British capital at home, as creating in Ireland a middle race of yeoman proprietors, and as affording a most secure and remunerative investment to those who have money to deposit, either as shareholders or purchasers, I fearlessly assert, from personal knowledge of certain of the parties engaged, and the objects in view, that this Society, if properly supported, will prove itself an invaluable adjunct to the working of the Encumbered Estates Act in particular, and generally to the prosperity of Ireland, and consequently of England herself. In order to facilitate the inquiries of English settlers, and to render them that assistance which their particular views may require, and which will be unreservedly and liberally bestowed, a committee of shareholders will probably be established in London, who will be prepared to afford particulars of lands on sale by the Society, together with the inspection of plans, sections, maps, and every other facility which may aid an intending settler in his selection. At a time when England offers to the small agricultural capitalist so inadequate a return for his outlay, the fact of the existence of this Society must be welcome intelligence. By having the payment for his farm spread over a number of years, the investor is enabled to retain a large portion of his capital for the necessary improvement of his estate; and he has also the opportunity of arranging with the Society as to the amount of his investment, the exact quantity of land he may require, and of choosing such a description of pro-

perty as to situation, soil, and general character and condition, as may best accord with his inclination, and prospects. Why Englishmen of active minds and means should embark themselves and their suffering in wild, and too often uncertain, speculations in far distant and barbarous colonies, is an incomprehensible fact, so long as there exist fairer opportunities for profitable investment of capital and labour so much nearer home. The supposed social state of Ireland, doubtless, deters many; yet the settler must bear in mind, that there are many falsehoods and exaggerations foisted upon the English public by parties who conceive themselves interested in retaining the country in its present state of ignorance and discontent. But the major part of Ireland is free from any outbreaks of popular violence, and many of the finest and most improvable districts may claim an immunity from outrage equally with any district in England itself. I staid two days and two nights in a farm-house among the mountains of Mayo, which was undefended by either lock or bolt; I have travelled on foot and on horseback unattended through wild and lonely districts after nightfall; I have passed through the midst of faction fights, and sojourned in cabins on the solitary shores of the Atlantic, and among the wild moors of the west; but never yet met with either theft, robbery, or violence, nay, not even with one symptom of incivility or disrespect.

Let the settler in Ireland but take this Scripture rule for his guide, "to do *justly*, to love *mercy*, and to walk *humbly* with his God," and general experience has proved, that he may pursue his schemes or his avocations unmolested there, and that there, too, he may live and die in peace!

THE END.

